

**De Paisano a Paisano: Mexican Migrants and the Transference of Political Attitudes to
their Country of Origin**

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Is there a link between immigration and democratization? Can immigrants transfer democratic values to their countries of origin? If so, what are the implications for the countries in question? This dissertation looks into the theoretical construct of social remittances and tests it empirically using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitatively speaking, this gets tested using survey and aggregate data. Qualitatively speaking, field work was carried out in a number of Mexican States. This work found that migrants do play a role in local politics through the transference of political attitudes. This includes, but is not limited to political participation, the incumbent party's fortunes, the governor's party's coalition's chances for reelection, the overall electoral competitiveness, and third party's share of the vote. This grassroots impact, however is tempered and constrained by the same dynamics that led individuals to migrate in the first place.

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PREFACE

I would like to thank all of my committee members, all of whom proved invaluable in getting this work completed. In particular, I would like to thank Barry Ames and Anibal Perez Liñán for their numerous comments and suggestions throughout the length of the project. I, of course, could not finish without also thanking my future wife, Beery Adams, who proved supportive in a million ways throughout the many days and nights that I sat at my computer in attacks of bliss and bouts of despair depending on the results of the day or the paragraphs that got written. Mil gracias.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Is there a link between immigration and democratization? Can immigrants transfer democratic values to their countries of origin? If so, what are the implications for the countries in question? As human flows from the developing to the developed world continue to increase, the intricacies of immigrant assimilation have generated much debate among academics and the public at large. This discussion, in turn, has produced two competing intellectual camps.

The first group has alarmist tones. Its members openly worry that the host countries no longer have the capability to assimilate the current waves of immigration, given both technological advances and the specific nature of the new flows in question, which they contend augurs disaster for both the host countries and the immigrants themselves (Huntington 2004, Wikan 2002). In particular, scholars in this camp argue that immigrants are bringing anti-democratic, authoritarian, fundamentally alien ideas that go contrary to the political culture and tradition of the country and that ultimately might severely damage the democratic pillars of the host societies. This harsh criticism has been directed at two groups in particular, Latinos in the United States and Muslims in Europe. Thus, to summarize, the argument from this camp is that Muslims and Latinos are essentially different to the host countries' citizenry, and despite a long presence, no assimilation has occurred and is not likely to be in the offing, which will ultimately lead to balkanization and hurt democracy.

The second group disputes these conclusions, uncovering a plethora of evidence showing that the behavior of the new flows is not so unlike previous immigrant waves, not to mention that immigrants are indeed assimilating. For example, they have found that immigrant minorities reflect attitudes on a host of issues similar to those of natives in the United States and Europe (Kelley and McAllister 1984, De la Garza, Falcón and García 1996, Dancygier and Saunders 2006). Likewise, research has shown that ethnic ties do not determine political attitudes (De la Garza and Yutim 2003), that partisanship and voting among immigrants do increase the longer immigrants stay in the United States (Bass and Casper 2001, Portes and Mozo 1985: 50, Wong 2000), that they are not less likely to be politically active than native born respondents (Barreto and Muñoz 2003), that education does increase participation among immigrants, but not always as one would expect (Doerschler 2004), and that they might even exceed natives in supporting and being satisfied with the host countries' institutions (Bilodeau 2004). In addition, the Pew Hispanic Center has uncovered additional data that demonstrates that Hispanics in the United States show a level of assimilation similar to previous immigrant waves. For instance, they point out that first generation immigrants speak English fluently, are as likely to marry outside their ethnic group, and tend to have better jobs than their parents.

Given a scenario where immigrants are assimilating and seeing a shift in their political attitudes, one is left with an intriguing proposition, namely the opposite of the argument proposed by the alarmist camp, that immigrants can lead to the transference of democratic and other positive norms to their countries of origin.¹ In fact, some scholars have already looked into this phenomenon, terming it *social remittances* (Levitt 1999). According to Levitt, social

¹ This is not to imply that socialization *only* has positive consequences, or that all individuals would be socialized and react in the same way. Depending on their residence, age, wealth and other socio-demographic factors, for example, individuals might be more likely to assimilate non-positive traits such as violence, ill-treatment of women and join gangs or other criminal networks as exemplified by the Mara Salvatrucha.

remittances are the ideas, behaviors, identities and social capital that flow from host to sending country communities (1999). While always theoretically possible, this phenomenon has only recently gained traction because of two interrelated phenomena, a larger number of migrants in all corners of the globe, and developments in travel and communication technology. This dissertation aims to build on this insight. Specifically, this work will show how the immigration experience itself contributes to attitude change, how these ideas are transferred back to the countries of origin, how the transference of these ideas has already had an impact on the political behavior of individuals in Latin America, and more specifically how these new political outlooks have contributed to Mexican political life, particularly in political races at the local level.

1.1 PREVIOUS LITERATURE

The political aspects of Levitt's conceptual framework have been almost completely unexplored. To this respect, previous literature can be divided into two distinct areas which contribute to the understanding of two interrelated aspects of this phenomenon. In the first component, political science has long explored how and why interaction with other people and environments can shape political behavior. In the second, anthropology and sociology have investigated how and why social networks across borders form, the ways in which they are different, and the impact they have at both ends of the connecting nodes. The literature for each is explored in more detail below.

Since the early transnational anthropological work of George Marcus (1989) which shifted the emphasis of ethnographies from place to places, there has been much work contextualizing transnational social networks. In the past decade, the political aspects of

transnationalism have gathered particular salience. Scholars have tried to theorize on the new deterritorialization dimensions of social movements and networks (Basch, et. al. 1994, Keck and Sikkink 1998, Khragam et. al. 2002, Tarrow 1998); on how these complex relationships are in effect creating a new form of citizenship that exists beyond inclusion within a single state (Goldring 2001, Soysal 1994, Fitzgerald 2000); and how migrants are actively shaping these networks independent of both the host country and country of origin (Castañeda 2006, Smith 2003). Within the more empirical strand there has been work dealing with the politics of transnational voting rights and dual citizenship (Guarnizo 1998, Jones-Correa 2001, Martinez Saldaña 2003) and the extraterritorial extension of homeland political parties (Levitt 2001, Smith 2003). Levitt, for example, provides empirical evidence for her theoretical claims using the Dominican migrants in Boston and their impact on the politics of the island (2001). Likewise, the politics of hometown organizations have become a much studied phenomenon recently (Goldring 1998, Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, Portes et. al. 2007) in addition to other forms of transnational political practices (Guarnizo et. al. 2003).

The transnational literature has suggested a link between immigration and democratization. For instance, Portes has pointed out that “translocal initiatives may not only benefit the home village or region but also challenge the political rule at the national level” (Portes 1999). Beyond that, scholars perceive a budding transnational civil society which has the potential to dramatically impact undemocratic top-down systems through grass roots organization bringing accountability and bottom-up political demands that might otherwise not exist in some places around the globe. In this way, the debate delineating the potential role of immigrants as democratizing agents for the countries of origin exists but has been mostly carried out at the theoretical level within the transnational literature (Guarnizo 1998b, Laguerre 1999,

Levitt 2001, Moctezuma Longoria 2002). The reasons for this are clearly methodological and revolve around the difficulty of measuring the possible impact migrants abroad have on their country of origin, whether on more common processes like elections or on the influence of transnational networks.

Thus, while this literature suggests ways in which immigrants could act as the conduits of democratic values, no systematic work has looked specifically at this issue. Levitt, for instance, provides anecdotal evidence based on interviews carried out in the island, but her emphasis is not on politics or specific political outcomes, and lacks any evidence beyond the Dominican Republic. Elsewhere, on matters of political impact the evidence is either scarce or not directly related to immigrants. For example, scholars have documented the active political participation that Mexican immigrants have had upon return to their homeland (Bada 2004, Smith and Bakker 2005, Velázquez 2004). Specifically Bada (2004) reported that 37% of the 113 *presidentes municipales* (county executives) in Michoacán had been former migrants. Other examples report on Dominican and Haitian political participation and how migrant groups in the United States have lobbied and gained their right to vote abroad along with some representation (Graham 1997, Guarnizo 1998a). Likewise, scholars interested in international relations have long recognized the importance of transnational networks as conduits of values (Khragram et. al. ed. 2002, Park 2005), but none of these works have recognized the importance of migrant networks as important agents of socialization.

Meanwhile, political science has long recognized the importance of friends and neighbors in providing cues and information to uninformed voters (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1991, Robinson 1976). It has also emphasized the importance of social networks in providing pressure and

encouragement to participate in politics (Gerber, Green and Larimer 2008, Huckfeldt and Sprague 1991, McClurg 2006, Nickerson 2008).

Gerber et. al., for example, made a connection between social pressure and voting. Their experiment demonstrated that those who were primed to consider social pressure were far more likely to vote than those who were not primed. Likewise, a face-to-face canvassing experiment where individuals were either exposed to a Get out the Vote message or a recycling pitch used by Nickerson found that 60% of the propensity to vote from the person receiving the voting pitch passed onto the other member of the household. It should be pointed out that this literature has faced an inherent self-selection bias problem from the beginning, some more than others. This revolves around the problem of untangling the extent to which the environment and networks contribute to the shifting of political attitudes and behavior. In other words, we know that environment and social networks matter in political decisions, we just do not know precisely to what degree.

More closely related to this issue, scholars have investigated how being exposed to *different* political ideas impacts political behavior. In particular, they have been interested with political disagreement. Some scholars have concluded that exposure to political disagreement has some positive effects on tolerance (Mutz 2002), that it increases participation in heterogeneous contexts because of increased competition (Campbell 2004), or because of the importance of participatory norms (Oliver 2001). Similarly, when considering the impact of political disagreement on campaign participation, McClurg found that the general context contributes to individuals' political attitudes, but this is conditioned by their status in their neighborhood, specifically whether or not they were part of the majority (2004). In this way, as models become more and more sophisticated, the literature has found ample evidence to suggest

that networks matter in the change and transference of political attitudes. To my knowledge, however, this has not been applied anywhere to immigrant social networks.

1.2 THE ARGUMENT

The above review of the literature illustrates two distinct but interrelated phenomena: immigrants are assimilating new attitudes from their host countries, while simultaneously engaging in cultural and political activities across borders that *provide the opportunity* to transmit democratic norms to their countries of origin. Are ideas actually being transferred, however? Before we can test this empirically, we need to develop a theoretical basis for two central questions in this matter. First, how does the immigration experience lead to the transformation of political attitudes? Second, how do these new attitudes actually get transmitted to the countries of origin?

1.2.1 The changing of attitudes

The first manner in which this happens has already been introduced, namely experience in long-established democracies help shape political beliefs, socializing individuals towards having attitudes long sustained to have a positive impact on democracy. Some evidence exists, for example, that after some time, Mexican immigrants living in the United States change their attitudes on a number of scores including trust of institutions, partisanship, among others (Camp 2003). In addition, evidence exist showing that Mexicans transform their original views of democracy to match that of non-Hispanic citizens even after relatively short periods of time (Camp 1999). Likewise, we know that individuals' support of democratic values, structures and

processes augments considerably once they perceive that a regime is delivering increased economic opportunities and democratic freedoms (Bratton and Mattes 1999, Evans and Whitefield 1995, Mishler and Rose 1997, Weil 1989). The immigrant population fits this exactly, as most of them come either because of economic or political reasons, and their perception of their host country promptly reflects this, regardless of how they might feel for their country of origin.

Second, the perception of the other and self begins to shift at its most basic level. For example, one is no longer *paisa* (someone from Medellín, Colombia), *tapatío* (someone from Guadalajara, Mexico), Salvadoran or Dominican, but Hispanic, Latino, foreigner or everywhere in between. This possible transformation in national and ethnic identification, can also lead to a renewed interest in politics, sometimes transforming the place immigrants see for themselves in the larger society to the point of altering their societal demands. For instance, there has been some work that shows that the longer immigrants stay in the United States the more likely they are to perceive discrimination (Portes, Parker and Cobas 1980). Within the transnational literature, there has also been evidence that in so-called exclusive political systems like Germany's, where migrants have difficulty shedding their label as foreigners, migrants develop more transnational claim making than in similar European countries (Koopman and Statham 2001). Others have looked at how this identity negotiation develops and at its subsequent political manifestations (Castañeda 2006).

Third, political socialization has long argued that life events have the greatest impact to shape people's attitudes when they occur in adolescence and young adulthood (Schumann and Corning 2000, Schumann and Scott 1989), precisely the age at which most individuals migrate to the United States and Europe. Related to this is what we know about knowledge, namely that it

not only can have the power to alter attitudes but also behavior (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). At the most basic level, this is what is happening with immigrants, particularly the underprivileged and uneducated who might not know much about the country they are immigrating to. Immigration is a particularly compelling lesson in politics because by definition the transformation occurs in going from one polity to another and therefore, immigrants find out not only about international policy regarding human flows, but also differences in political structures, debate, issues, and at the most basic level changes in the basic services that the state provides—something particularly noticeable if the host country operates more efficiently than the country of origin. This can occur even with limited interaction with the government of the host country, but also in everyday activities. Consider, for example, Latin American immigrants watching the nightly news in the United States. While the news in their countries of origin might have taken some interest in world events, it is safe to assume that they concentrate for the most part on national and regional issues. Not so with the Spanish news in the United States. Given their audience, the Spanish news TV networks have an extensive coverage of Latin America bringing into immigrant living rooms all kinds of political events that they would likely not have come across before.

Fourth, in recent decades political scientists have recognized the importance of contextual influences on participation, vote choice, candidate evaluation, attitude formation, among others (Huckfeldt 1986, Wald, Owen and Hill 1988), particularly in the way that personal friendships and social networks can shape the attitude formation of individuals (Eulau and Rothenberg 1986, Gimpel, Dyck and Shaw 2004, McCloskey and Dalhgren 1959, MacKuen and Brown 1987). Again, immigrant communities in the host nation provide a suitable context both to politicize the individual and to transmit political values. This is because in a hostile cultural environment,

immigrants tend to cluster to preserve their identity. This, in turn, brings individuals into relatively intimate contact, which might otherwise never have happened in their country of origin given class and other social differences. In this way, as immigration expands social networks to include individuals whose *raison d'être* for being abroad might contradict another immigrants' assumptions about his or her country, perceptions about both their home country and the political processes there might change.

Finally, the political behavior literature has shown high levels of social trust to be a major predictor in support for democracy (Putnam 1993, 1995, Brehm and Rahn 1997). While it could be said that immigrants already possess high interpersonal trust given the associated risks in moving to another country and the need for an extended social network, it has also been argued that the immigration experience itself increases social trust, because immigrants have a higher need of social networks to operate successfully in their host country (Portes 1997, Massey et. al. 1998). To summarize then, the experience of immigration itself, transforms the political attitudes of immigrants through a number of social, economic and environmental factors, which in turn lead to them becoming potential conduits of values.

Certainly, not all migrants will necessarily absorb all ideas in the same way; local context, agency, social networks, social class, education and the politics of the country of origin matter. Levitt recognized this and developed three broad assimilationist patterns for migrants. These are recipient observers, instrumental adapters, and purposeful innovators (2001). The first one are individuals that have little to no interaction with the host society and must passively come into contact with new ideas and political attitudes through other members of their migrant group, television, newspapers or radio. Recipient observers are more likely to be men than women. The second type—instrumental adapters—are far more integrated into life in the host

society. Given the new challenges they face as they venture further into different points of the public space, they adapt skills and attitudes for pragmatic reasons. As Levitt puts it: “they adjust the way they interpret the world to equip themselves better to meet the challenges and constraints of migrant life.” (2001: 57). Finally, Levitt’s purposeful innovators are individuals who actively seek out new ideas, attitudes and experiences. The key difference is that unlike instrumental adaptors, they alter their mindset not as a pragmatic concession, but as an enthusiastic embrace of all potential beneficial aspects of the host society. For our present purposes, one would expect not just a wider repertoire of altered political attitudes from Levitt’s purposeful innovators, but also broader influence with those individuals who they remain in contact with back home. Thus, hypothetically speaking, one could anticipate that attitude change would be most likely to occur when individuals migrated to small immigrant communities rather than long established immigrant enclaves, where interaction with the larger host community became a matter of necessity rather than choice. Still, while one would expect local context and personal circumstances to matter, and while they might aggregate differently depending on existing social networks in the host society, it is important to note that all migrants have the potential to a shift in attitude because they all face at the most fundamental level, no matter the particular host society or country of origin, a change in political practices and culture. The matter is to trace the impact of these changed ideas once they occur.

1.2.2 The channeling of attitudes

While the instruments behind the transformation of immigrants’ political attitudes might seem rather straight forward, it is still necessary to elaborate on the link between this change with immigrants and their transformation into social remittances. There are two basic reasons

behind the existence of this dynamic today. First, immigrants as individuals have much more contact with their country of origin than even just a decade ago. Technological advances in communications have made it possible for those living abroad to maintain relatively close contact with those left behind. Not only have international telephone rates been dramatically reduced, but e-mail, instant messaging and other web interactions have virtually eliminated communication barriers across borders. Simultaneously, a whole service industry has developed around the sending and receiving of remittances, increasing dramatically their economic leverage and thickening the relationship between those abroad and those left behind along the way.

This latter point is particularly important because we know from the political behavior literature that simple contact with ideas or beliefs is not enough to change anyone's mind. Other factors play a role, particularly whether the source happens to be someone who is trustworthy (Zaller 1992). Immigrants who send remittances home fit this role rather well. This is because they are both more likely to have regular communication with their communities of origin and more likely to enjoy the admiration of their countrymen, given their success abroad, and their willingness to share that with those left behind. In fact, I see remittances as a proxy for social networks. Evidence for one side of this link exists as we do know that Mexicans who stay in contact with their relatives in Mexico are more likely to be politically active in the United States (Garcia 1987: 386). We also know that "if someone has a weak inclination to vote, the presence of another family member who has some tendency in the same direction will raise the probability that both will vote." (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980: 45).

Second, institutions mediating the relationship between immigrants and their country of origin have also multiplied, both at the grassroots level and from the perspective of the state. For example, hometown organizations have proliferated all across Mexico, both because of the

interest of Mexicans in the United States to help their local community and a state program that matches funds sent from abroad. Similar institutional initiatives have been put into place in India and Turkey. Elsewhere, Central American countries have also become interested in developing this relationship with organizations that have developed organically in the United States.

Another case in point is the policy states have pursued in trying to maintain a relationship with its citizens abroad encouraging them to return, and granting voting rights to those living outside of the country in a number of cases as different as Ecuador, Eritrea, Vietnam and Romania. For example, in the case of Vietnam, the government has actively tried to bring back those citizens that left the country due to the turmoil of the 1970s and 1980s. It has met with some success and the top communist leadership has insisted that their present success would have been impossible without those “patriotic” migrants (Economist, 2008). Meanwhile, the Ecuadorian government has expanded voting rights to its citizens abroad, courted them as voting block, encouraged them to invest in their country, and instituted laws to facilitate property acquisition for those outside the country. This shift in policy has given migrants a collective voice that routinely finds room in their country of origin. For instance, it is not rare to read migrants opinions on the issues of the day in Ecuadorian or Mexican newspapers. This is significant not only in the sense of augmenting the possible points of influence for migrants, but also in that institutional growth channeling migrants opinions has awarded them greater legitimacy, paving the way for immigrants to act as a possible conduit of values.

In this way, this dissertation argues that the immigration experience itself leads immigrants to modify their political attitudes due to two distinct but related processes, namely politicization as a result of going from one country to another (particularly one regime to another), and political socialization as immigrants come in contact with political values different

from the ones in their country of origin. Given this change in political attitudes, one should expect some type of political outcome. I argue that immigrants serve as conduits of values, which have distinct political impact in their countries of origin. This occurs most visibly through elections, but is not only limited to that. Furthermore, I argue that while ex-patriots, dissidents and exile politics have a long history in affecting political outcomes at home, the phenomenon I describe is distinct from these earlier dynamics given both the raw number of immigrants, their ability to maintain contact with their countries of origin, as well as the new found importance of remittances in the countries' economies. Hence, the causal argument can be summarized in this way: Individuals migrate. The host society and the migration experience itself provides the opportunity for migrants to shift their political attitudes with migrants falling into various broad patterns of assimilation. This, in turn, leads to a behavior change and the transference of these attitudes to their country of origin, which should have some impact on political outcomes like elections and political participation.

To show evidence in each instance, the dissertation is divided into four chapters, three empirical and a conclusion. The second chapter looks at the impact that migrants have on political attitudes at the individual level using survey data both from individuals in the U.S. and those who have returned to their country of origin. The third chapter looks at the impact that migrants have on political outcomes in the aggregate. Using data collected in Mexican *municipios*, I explore the impact of migrants on participation, electoral competitiveness, and party incumbency. The fourth chapter, reports the fieldwork carried out in Mexican *municipios* in the summer of 2007. The effort combined interviews of political elites and regular individuals in areas with heavy migration to the United States. The final chapter concludes.

2.0 IMPACT OF MIGRANTS AT THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Is there a link between immigration and democratization? Can immigrants transfer democratic values to their countries of origin? If so, what impact does this have on the political behavior of the countries of origin? More generally, what broader implications does this have for the migrant-sending regions? The literature has suggested that *social* remittances might, in fact, be another phenomenon attributable to migrants, but no one has tested this possibility because of the general lack of data. The previous chapter has outlined in detail the theoretical underpinnings exploring these questions. In particular, the argument delineating why and how migrants can act as conduits of political values has been set forth.

This contention can be summarized as follows. First, the immigration experience can lead to a fundamental shift in the perception about place and an individual's relationship to it. Before migration, the point of reference for most migrants tends to be either class related or regional, but after migration, nationality becomes the main point of reference, sometimes the exclusive one. In dealing with other migrants, with people from the host country in general, or with institutions, an individual's identity becomes intertwined with that individual's nationality. This first leads to a fundamental rethinking of the individual's own country, particularly for those living in relatively isolated areas, and eventually to increased politicization as migrants begin to make the connection between political outcomes and policies.

Second, immigration foments the interaction of migrants of different social backgrounds and potentially even languages. Oftentimes, migrants come into contact with individuals who share their nationality but little else, and thus, it is yet another instance in which the knowledge of their country of origin begins to change. More fundamentally, this interaction allows migrants to come into contact with political ideas and positions different from their own (Hoskin 1989).

Simultaneously, the immigration experience increases the potential to shift political attitudes. The reason is clear. While mere exposure to new ideas is usually not enough to change anyone's behavior, a migrant's identity dilutes individuals' natural propensity to ignore or reject ideas. This stems from the fact that migrants tend to be younger and depend heavily on social networks to operate in the host country, thus, trust is high within this arrangement and fertile ground for potential assimilation of new political ideas. For example, consider two individuals of different social classes from the same Central American country at opposite ends of the Civil War divide of the 1980s. Despite having dramatically opposite political opinions about their country, the immigration experience could elicit their commonalities related to everyday life in the U.S., given their shared nationality and social concerns as an ethnic community in a foreign country. This generates an environment where attitudes related to the Civil War might shift, or at the very least soften, in relation to each other.

Fourth, the immigration experience itself, at its most basic form, is a shift in the political order, which implies change in the most fundamental aspects of an individual's relationship to the government. Given this, the immigration experience is a constant comparison—at times quite unconscious—between two distinct set of political institutions, with the result that individuals can become more critical of the institutions of the country of origin, or at the very least, begin to recognize their shortcomings. This is not to say that migrants immediately embrace their host

country and want to recreate it in their country of origin, as soon as possible, but merely that migrants begin a gradual shift in political attitudes, which has an impact on their political behavior and political outcomes in their native countries. Given this change in political attitudes, one should expect some type of political outcome. I argue that immigrants serve as conduits of values, which have distinct political impact in their countries of origin. This occurs most visibly through elections, but is not only limited to that. Furthermore, I argue that while ex-patriots, dissidents and exile politics have a long history in affecting political outcomes at home, the phenomenon I describe is distinct from these earlier dynamics given both the raw number of immigrants, their ability to maintain contact with their countries of origin, as well as the new found importance of remittances in the countries' economies.

Again, our theory suggests that social networks shape and transfer political attitudes at both ends of the social link. This leads to interesting manifestations that can be corroborated empirically and that lend us the hypotheses to be tested in this chapter. First, we can theorize about immigrants living in the United States. As mentioned before, one can expect that migrants in the United States are more critical of their country's institutions. We might also anticipate that migrants in the U.S. hold different partisan preferences than those that remained in Mexico. Thus, our first two hypotheses are:

H₁ Dissatisfaction with Mexican institutions should be higher the longer one lives in the United States.

H₂ Partisanship identification should be different the longer one lives in the United States.

Next, we can hypothesize about those individuals who have returned or who have a link

abroad through the receipt of remittances. Thus, we might predict the following:

H₃ Participation in political affairs will be higher both for those individuals who have lived in the United States and for those who receive remittances.

H₄ Political efficacy will be higher both for those individuals who have lived in the United States and for those who receive remittances.

H₅ Attitudes against political corruption will be higher both for those individuals who have lived in the United States and for those who receive remittances.

In this way, this chapter will analyze the potential change in the political behavior of individuals. It will analyze the impact that having lived in the United States or received remittances has on one's level of political participation, political efficacy, and attitudes about corruption. It will do so, first, by taking into account the attitudes of immigrants living in the United States.

2.1 THE ARGUMENT

To test whether individuals' attitudes in the country of origin are actually changing as a result of influence from migrants, I used two surveys, the Pew Hispanic Center Survey of Mexicans

Living in the U.S. and the Latin American Public Opinion Project. Given the potential criticisms of self-selection bias, I utilized the first survey to demonstrate how migrants *still living* in the United States have *different* views about partisanship and institutions in Mexico than those remaining in the country; thus, proving that only the migration experience can explain the potential attitude change. Similarly, the second survey will display the extent to which, having lived in the United States mattered for attitude change among return migrants.

The first survey collected the responses of Mexican migrants in a number of sites in the United States during the span of several months between 2004 and 2005. It should be noted that the survey was not a representative sample of migrants in the United States. This is largely due to the difficulties in delineating the target population and in reaching out to these individuals given their migration status. Rather, the survey was a purposive sample that interviewed Mexican migrants as they visited the Mexican consulate. The sample contained 900 cases from a wide variety of locations in the U.S. These comprised the major areas of Mexican presence in the country (Chicago, L.A., Dallas) in addition to some smaller and newer immigrant communities (Raleigh and Atlanta), and places where migrants lived almost exclusively off of agricultural jobs (Fresno). Overall, the sample had a larger educational attainment than the migrant population at large, but does resemble the migrant population in terms of age and gender. While this sample does not represent the ideal characteristics one would hope for in a survey, at the moment no sample can avoid these issues because we simply lack accuracy in some basic characteristics of the target population including size, and location.

The dependent questions of interest revolved around two topics: institutions and partisanship. The first inquired about institutional efficiency and asked individuals to rank how well Mexican institutions functioned. The second asked about closeness to the three major

Mexican parties: Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN) and Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD). Specifically, the dependent questions asked: “In general, what is your opinion of how Mexican institutions work? Would you say that they are very good, good, fair, bad, very bad?” And, “In Mexican politics, which of the political parties, do you feel closest to: the PRI, the PAN, the PRD, or do you not feel close to any of the parties?”

On the other hand, the independent variables incorporated into the statistical models had a rich variance in capturing a number of important aspects of life in the United States for Mexican citizens. These comprised whether one had American citizenship, how long one had lived in the United States, whether one traveled to the country, the level of attention paid to Mexican affairs, and the extent to which one kept in touch with family in Mexico. Likewise, the survey contained an additional variable—commonly used in the literature as a measure of social capital and a predictor of political participation—whether one belonged to any kind of civic organization in the United States.

The second survey included data for a number of Latin American countries: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Colombia. These countries were chosen both because they happen to be the countries with the highest percentage of migrants abroad, and because all of them now allow their citizens to vote abroad, and retain their citizenship should they acquire a new one (Escobar 2007). The survey questions, especially designed to be comparative, were uniform across the region with questions of particular interest added to some countries. The project, headed by Mitchell Seligson, was meant to be nationally representative of the voting age population and was carried out so as to obtain a stratified and clustered sample.

In general, the interviews were carried out among roughly between 1,500 individuals per country, although it varied slightly from country to country.²

The survey contained the standard questions on political culture exploring inter-personal trust, trust in institutions, political tolerance, support for democracy, in addition to more specific questions on perceptions of corruption and delinquency. I used these questions to create additive indexes that serve as the dependent variables for most of the statistical models below. For democratic attitudes, for instance, I summed a number of questions relating to one's tolerance for free speech and free assembly of those with anti-democratic views. The higher the score, the more one strongly supported the right of these people to enjoy free speech and assembly. As far as the dependent variables, as already mentioned, both surveys contained the standard questions relating to political behavior, including trust in institutions, conceptualization of democracy, tolerance for others' political activities, regime support, political participation in a number of guises—whether violent or non-violent, and whether anti-systemic or not. In addition, the surveys asked questions alluding to inter-personal trust, church attendance and other forms of social capital, all of which have been shown to be important in predicting political participation (Putnam 1993, Brehm and Rahn 1997).

More important for this chapter, however, is a battery of questions dealing directly with immigration and the connection to people living abroad. Specifically, the independent variables of interest come from two questions. These are: “Have you lived in the United States in the last three years?” And “Does your family receive remittances?” These will provide the independent variables of interest. A number of additional independent variables are also available within the survey. Among these we find partisanship and interest in politics measures, both of which have

² For more specific information on the nature of the project see Seligson, 2004.

been proven to have an impact on political participation (Verba and Nie 1972). I further utilized questions long understood to contribute to participation, such as sociotropic voting. Finally, I included a number of standard control variables pertaining to individuals. These include gender, age, education, income, religion, marital status and two variables—constructed as additive indexes—that aimed to capture individuals knowledge and how informed of current events they were. It should also be noted that I used OLS with robust standard errors in addition to logit models where appropriate.

2.2 DISCUSSION

In looking at a hypothetical change as a result of immigrant influence, I explored a number of possible attitude changes in the country of origin. As I mentioned at the outset, I was particularly interested in the impact on individuals' participation and democratic attitudes. Before I can explore these issues, however, there are a number of issues to address. The first one is to describe to the reader the individuals on which this narrative centers. To do this, I have provided for the reader a first table that describes some important demographic aspects of the sample from the Latin American Public Project which we will be working with. This table illustrates a number of things. First, the individuals in question tend to be younger when receiving remittances, but the age is more widespread regarding those who have lived in the United States in the previous three years. In fact, in this sample, over a quarter of those who lived in the US in the past three years were over 50. Second, individuals tend to be poorer, particularly when receiving remittances. More than half the sample of those who receive remittances enjoy roughly a mere \$350 dollars or less a month. It should be emphasized that the

survey question specifically asked the respondent to include any income coming from remittances, so that the actual income in their own country could be much smaller. Those who have lived in the US in the past three years are somewhat richer—presumably as a result of their migration experience—but they still make up a disproportionate amount of less privileged individuals. Third, individuals who receive remittances are more likely to be female, married and uneducated. On the other hand, those who have lived in the US in the past three years are likely to be male, have slightly more education, but just as likely to be married. Finally, both are more likely to be catholic, but far more so if they have lived in the US in the past three years. Table 1 is reported below.

Table 1. Descriptive Variables on Who Obtains Remittances

Variable	Remittances	USA
% of Sample	11%	2.3%
% Age (16-20)	31.9%	16.0%
% Age (20-35)	24.1%	29.1%
% Age (35-50)	20.6%	27.8%
% Age (50-92)	23.2%	27.0%
% with income less than \$320 a month	58.4%	48.6%
% with income \$321-540 monthly	22.7%	27.0%
% with income more than \$540	18.9%	24.3%
% with six years of education or less	40.8%	34.6%
Female	50.7%	41.8%
Married (and common law)	52.8%	58.2%
Catholic	63.2%	70.5%

Another important issue that requires attention is the self-selection bias possibility. It could be, after all, that individuals who migrate have higher inter-personal trust, tolerance for others, or some other attitude related to participation and support of democracy, and thus, any statistical results we might find in this direction might only be a reflection of these values, independent completely of the immigration experience. In order to dispel this, I first ran a regression to understand the reasons why individual leave for another country. Also, in all subsequent regressions, I included this variable to show the reader that the results are upheld even when controlling for an individuals' potential decision to leave. Table 2 uses an OLS model that regresses whether an individual plans to leave the country to work in the next for years on a number of probable explanations including a score for democratic attitudes. The latter, it should be mentioned, is an additive index that combines several questions the reader may find in appendix A, along with other important variables used throughout the chapter.

The most important result here is that, as can be observed, individuals planning on leaving the country are no more democratic than those who would stay behind. Neither are they more likely to have other predictive values associated with democracy such as community participation. Instead, the regression paints a profile, familiar to anyone who studies immigration, namely those considering leaving their country tend to be young, male, and uneducated, and who might have been abroad themselves or at least have contact with those abroad as the positive correlation with those who receive remittances and the dependent variable indicates.

Table 2. Democratic Attitudes and the Decision to Migrate

Variable	Coefficient	S. E.
Receives Remittances	.849^{***}	(.073)
Lived in the USA	1.11^{***}	(.159)
Democratic Attitudes	-.001	(.002)
Knowledgeable	-.084 ^{***}	(.029)
Informed	.055 ^{***}	(.014)
Comm. Participation	.007	(.009)
Age	-.042 ^{***}	(.001)
Female	-.573 ^{***}	(.056)
Education	.036 ^{***}	(.008)
Catholic	-.277 ^{***}	(.057)
Income	-.021	(.014)
Unemployed	-.039	(.027)
Constant	3.49 ^{***}	(.197)

Number of Observations 9855

Dependent Variable: Decision to Migrate in the Next Three Years.

All Prob>F 0.000

Pseudo R²: 0.992

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

Still, the reader might remain skeptical. A point of contention could be that of potential endogeneity since these surveys are not panel data and cannot be tested at different points in time. In other words, perhaps the people being asked now about leaving might not be very democratic, but earlier ones were, the very ones unavailable in the survey. While a valid point, theoretical and empirical considerations about these particular waves of immigration would make this rather unlikely. For example, we know that other than having more female migrants, the reasons and make up of Mexican migration has changed little since the second wave of immigration to the United States in the 1940s (Massey 2002). We also know that the main thrust of Central American and even Colombian immigration came through as a result of political

violence in the 1980s and 1990s respectively. That is, we have plenty of evidence that individuals migrated because of more immediate considerations like violence and economic opportunity rather than a desire to move where there was more tolerance for individual rights. This has long been captured in the literature, and in fact, democratic attitudes are hardly, if ever, considered as a push/pull factor in the immigration literature (Jenkins 1977, Clark and Smith 1996, Portes 1997, Massey 2002). I also considered this question during my field research in Mexico, and found no evidence that democratic attitudes are, in fact, what cause people to migrate. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

To further corroborate this, I used the Pew Hispanic Center Survey of Hispanics Living in the U.S. That is, I looked at immigrants *already* living abroad. Here, the first question was whether or not there were any attitude changes with those living in the U.S. relative to those who never left. This is what the table 3 captures in various models.

The first thing to notice is that controlling for age, income, gender, and education, the longer one lives in the United States, the more likely that person is to be dissatisfied with Mexican institutions. A similar result occurs for individuals who send money to Mexico, precisely the ones at the other side of the remittance link. Not surprisingly, having U.S. citizenship also leads one to increased dissatisfaction, interestingly even when controlling for visits to the country.

Table 3. Attitudes about Mexican Institutions From Mexicans Living in the U.S., OLS Model

Variable	Coefficient/S.E. (1)		Coefficient/S.E. (2)		Coefficient/S.E. (3)	
Years lived in the US	-0.007*	(.003)				
US Citizenship			-0.289***	(.085)	-0.286***	(.085)
Sent Money to Mexico	-0.170*	(.079)	-0.178*	(.078)	-0.195*	(.078)
Phone Contact Frequency	.002	(.027)	-0.008	(.025)	-0.003	(.026)
Travel to Mexico	.273**	(.077)	.284**	(.075)	.276**	(.076)
Membership in Civic Organization	-0.006	(.048)	-0.003	(.048)	-0.048	(.059)
Level of Attention to Mexican Affairs					.104***	(.041)
Female	-0.039	(.072)	-0.047	(.072)	-0.061	(.072)
Income	.002	(.001)	-0.002	(.001)	.002*	(.001)
Education	-0.086**	(.000)	-0.081**	(.000)	.092**	(.000)
Age	.004	(.004)	.003	(.003)	.003	(.004)
Constant	2.86**		2.88**		2.66**	
R ²	0.039		0.046		0.058	
Adjusted R ²	0.029		0.036		0.048	
Number of Observations	868		875		866	

Dependent Variable: The Functioning of Mexican Institutions

Prob F= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

This table, therefore, provides some evidence that living in the United States has an independent effect on how one views one's institutions of origin. Certainly, the reader might note that simple dissatisfaction with an institution does not guarantee any particular response, particularly related to the transference of those values. This does, however, make it more likely that they will, and it is only the first part of the puzzle. The third table also notes some impact on partisanship. What I did here was run individual logit models using partisan preferences which I first converted to dummy variables, so that each of the models uses one's closeness to the particular party as the dependent variable.

Table 4. Closeness to a Particular Party from Mexicans Living in the US, Logit Model

Variable	PRI	PRD	PAN
Years lived in the US	-.019* (.003)	-.020 (.014)	.005 (.007)
Sent Money to Anyone in Mexico	-.302 (.190)	-.053 (.256)	-.146 (.169)
Frequency of Phone Contact	.002 (.027)	-.004 (.097)	-.057 (.061)
Travel to Mexico	-.104 (.190)	-.199 (.261)	.601** (.161)
Membership in Civic Organization	-.077 (.165)	-.040 (.365)	-.078 (.250)
Level of Attention to Mexican Affairs	.168 (.101)	.418** (.152)	.288*** (.091)
Female	.026 (.177)	.547 (.236)	-.044 (.155)
Income	-.002 (.002)	-.003 (.003)	-.002 (.002)
Education	-.033 (.072)	-.076 (.257)	.002 (.157)
Age	.006 (.008)	.009 (.128)	.015 (.078)
Constant	-1.40**	3.41**	-2.08**
Pseudo R ²	0.015	0.032	0.040
Number of Observations	958	924	866

Dependent Variable: Closeness to the PRI, PAN, PRD

Prob F= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

The result that stands out immediately is the fact that Mexicans living abroad are no more likely to feel close to any of the particular parties the longer they live in the U.S., but do, in fact, have far less partisanship in favor of the PRI. However weak the actual significance, this is an important result given that this survey was taken in 2004, that only about 3% of the sample had been in the US for less than two years, and the average length of time for the individuals in the sample was 16 years, the model illustrates that Mexicans abroad were far less partisan for the PRI than one would expect the general population in Mexico to be. Moreover, the reader might also consider that the other two variables of significance, paying attention to Mexican affairs or traveling to Mexico prove significant for partisanship to the PAN and the PRD, but not the PRI.

That is, any of the individuals who actually pay attention to their home country politics was more likely to prefer the traditional opposition parties.

To summarize our results so far: we have found evidence that migrants do not leave their country for political reasons and do not hold more democratic attitudes than the general population at large. Likewise, we have discovered that Mexicans living abroad are more likely to be dissatisfied with institutions in their home country, feel less partisan devotion for the PRI, but do not replace it with allegiance to other parties, a clear example of political attitude change. If this attitude is transferred, it should be noticeable in the survey for those individuals who are *living in Mexico* and *not* abroad. This is the next table to be reported.

Again, this table suggests that those who have lived abroad are far more likely to be dissatisfied with Mexican Institutions, but interestingly are also more likely to participate in their community either in trying to help to solve a problem in their neighborhood, or by attending meetings aimed at solving issues affecting the community. In this way, the table illustrates an idea that seems to have been transferred.

Table 5. Impact of Migration on Satisfaction with Mexican Institutions in Mexico (OLS Model)

Variable	Coefficient	S. E.
Receives Remittances	-.027	(.053)
Lived in the USA	-.133*	(.076)
Thinking about leaving the country	.095*	(.057)
Knowledgeable	.004	(.021)
Informed	-.003***	(.009)
Horizontal Trust	.003	(.013)
Institutional Trust	-.009**	(.001)
Community Participation	.009***	(.007)
Current government support	-.141**	(.024)
Ideological spectrum	-.001***	(.001)
Age	.001	(.001)
Female	-.008	(.037)
Education	.013**	(.006)
Catholic	.001	(.019)
Income	.001	(.009)
Current Economic Situation of the Country	-.084***	(.023)
Economic Forecast for the Country	-.022	(.034)
Unemployed	.012	(.033)
Registered to vote	-.033*	(.019)
Constant	3.49***	(.197)
Number of Observations	1222	

Dependent Variable: satisfaction with democracy in Mexico

All Prob>F 0.000

R² .1467

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

The next model to consider is one examining whether immigrants have any impact on political participation. In this case, this variable is also an additive index, which included voting, along with other forms of participation like partaking in a political protest, among others. Table 6 is reported below below. As one might expect, the standard variables associated with political participation are also significant in this model. Being more informed, participating more in community matters, and having greater institutional trust are all predictors of whether one

actually participates more in politics or not. Likewise, being older, better educated and self identifying on the left side of the spectrum also make it more likely that someone will partake in political activity.

More to the point of this chapter are the bolded variables. The first variable of significance is our measure for remittances. If an individual's family has received remittances, the individual is more likely to participate in politics. As I have already stated, remittances are used here as proxies for social networks. In this way, given the numerous control variables in place—income, age, etc.—one can only conclude that people who receive remittances participate more because of the influences of individuals abroad. Of course, it is undeniable that the impact is relatively low, but the reader might consider that given the limitations of the data, it is important that it came out significant. This is because there are numerous characteristics that the survey used here did not ask and thus, our statistical method could not capture. In particular, following Levitt's theoretical model we do not know much about the other end of the spectrum, and the individuals sending these remittances.

This also partly explains why the United States variable turns out to be negative. The explanation stems from its composition and its faulty nature. The question measures only whether someone has lived in the United States in the past three years, but does not differentiate the actual time these people spent abroad or whether they returned home that very week. In addition, the dependent variable of political participation measures specific activities within a very limited time frame, hence making it possible that those living in the US were still absent and did not have as many and did not have as many opportunities to take part in political events as those that never left. Nevertheless, I also included a model without the US variable to demonstrate to the reader that the significance does not wash out once this is taken out of the

model. Subsequently, I ran a table to explore whether or not our independent variables of interest mattered in shaping an individual's democratic attitudes. As the reader can corroborate in Appendix B, the dependent variable in this case is an additive index, comprised of questions related to democratic tolerance. In particular, the questions tap into a person's attitudes toward free speech and the rights of individuals with anti-governmental views, which were in turn scored the highest the more that person supported those rights.

Table 6. Impact of Migrants on Political Participation

Variable	Model 1	Model 2
Receives Remittances	.213*** (.081)	.195*** (.074)
Lived in the USA	-.309** (.151)	
Thinking about leaving the country	-.067** (.028)	-.055** (.025)
Knowledgeable	-.006 (.025)	-.020 (.024)
Informed	.101*** (.011)	.099*** (.011)
Horizontal Trust	-.021 (.019)	-.020 (.017)
Institutional Trust	.007** (.001)	.006*** (.001)
Comm. Participation	.113*** (.008)	.121*** (.007)
Current gov. support	-.057** (.027)	-.034 (.026)
Ideological spectrum	-.002*** (.001)	-.003*** (.001)
Age	.012*** (.002)	.011*** (.002)
Female	-.279*** (.047)	-.290*** (.044)
Education	.054*** (.007)	.050*** (.006)
Catholic	.067 (.052)	.092* (.024)
Income	-.041*** (.011)	-.037*** (.011)
Current Economic Situation of the Country	.011 (.028)	-.022 (.026)
Economic Forecast for the Country	.086*** (.034)	.098*** (.031)
Unemployment	.016 (.020)	.014 (.019)
Registered to vote	-.210*** (.037)	-.284*** (.038)
Constant	.715*** (.224)	.858*** (.210)
Number of Observations	7437	8405
R ²	.0931	.0995

Dependent Variable: political participation (see additive index)

All Prob>F 0.000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

Thus, the regression demonstrates, not surprisingly, that the less an individual trusts the government and the more that individual participated in their community, the more likely it was for that individual to have higher democratic values. Neither of the important variables appear significant, however. It becomes necessary to take into account some of Levitt's ideas about the individuals receiving remittances. As she puts it, a person would be more likely to accept and adapt a social remittance if that person has more access to resources. One way to do this is for add an interaction to the model. Once we do that, we find out that the conditional coefficient when receiving remittances is 1.3 with a significance of 0.07. This again means that those with connections to individuals abroad are more likely to be anti-authoritarian and actively support tolerance for those with opposite views to current government policy. No doubt the reader noticed that the other important variable, however, did not prove significant. In fact, one might ask if migrants truly are the motors behind democratic tolerance, how could it be that they do not also show up as significant in the model? While also a valid point, I would argue that this stems again from the nature of the question that it is based on. The query in the survey, in fact, does not differentiate the reasons why individuals left, or make a distinction between those who spent weeks and those who spent years. Clearly, it is not my intention to argue that merely showing up in a foreign country for a few weeks is enough to shift one's political attitudes about democratic governance. Actually, even if we could be sure that every single individual who answered in the affirmative to that question had spent exactly three years abroad, one could doubt *a priori* that this would be enough time to change something as essential as democratic attitudes. The differences between our two variables of interest in the models, however, give us further clues into how this process actually develops. I will develop this further in the conclusion.

Table 7. Impact of Migrants on Democratic Attitudes

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
Receives Remittances	.207	(.419)	1.62*	(.885)
Lived in the USA	-1.20	(.943)	-1.20	(.940)
Thinking about leaving Mexico	-.077	(.149)	-.077	(.149)
Knowledgeable	1.09***	(.139)	1.09***	(.139)
Informed	.193***	(.064)	.192***	(.064)
Horizontal Trust	.133	(.100)	.131	(.100)
Institutional Trust	.090***	(.009)	.090***	(.009)
Comm. Participation	-.108***	(.040)	-.108***	(.040)
Ideological spectrum	-.019***	(.004)	-.019***	(.004)
Age	-.020**	(.009)	-.020**	(.009)
Female	-.197	(.263)	-.206	(.263)
Education	.335***	(.038)	.333***	(.038)
Catholic	.209	(.302)	.207	(.302)
Income	.438***	(.063)	.475***	(.067)
Current Economic Situation of the Country	-.229	(.156)	-.235	(.156)
Economic Forecast for the Country	.227	(.182)	.228	(.182)
Unemployment	-.324***	(.117)	-.319***	(.117)
Registered to vote	.018	(.220)	-.010	(.221)
Wealth X Remittances			-.315*	(.170)
Constant	19.7***	(1.25)	19.7***	(1.25)
Number of Observations	7428		7428	
R ²	.1072		.1075	

Dependent Variable: political participation (see additive index)

All Prob>F 0.000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

Still, before we do that, consider the last table. The following table portrays a comparable phenomenon; it analyzes whether there was any influence on attitudes about corruption. In general, corruption remains a pervasive problem in Latin America, and is one of the issues that the public routinely complains about. Then again, it has been argued that corruption in the region is perceived as the cost associated with doing business or getting the wheels of government moving and hence, individuals living there have a higher threshold of tolerance for

it. Therefore, if the immigration experience should have any impact, this is one of the areas that should be the most obvious, both given the stark difference between the nodes on each end of the international link, and the fact that immigrants are more likely to notice it. Again, I created an additive index, where the higher a person scored on the metric the more intolerant that person would be of corrupt practices, served as the dependent variable. Although I wanted to use data from all the countries of this model, the surveys for the various countries differed in this metric. Only in three countries were specific scenarios for corruption given, where the public was subsequently asked whether they found the act corrupt or not. Given the focus of chapter three, I decided to use the questions solely for Mexico, and ran a model testing whether receiving remittances or living in the United States foments intolerance of corrupt acts among those individuals. The questions employed in the creation of the model gave a number of scenarios where politicians used their office for their own or their family advantage. People answering the survey then had to select from three different choices that defined the act as corrupt or not, with a middle ground that suggested the action was corrupt, but that it should not be punished.

The model corroborated our intuition. First, notice that having less trust in the government leads to more tolerance for corruption. While this might seem contradictory to the reader, it is related to the perception of corruption as a cost. That is, since these people do not trust the government and thus do not see it as efficient, they might have a world view, where corruption is tolerated because attempting to avoid corrupt practices will only lead to frustration. Similarly, note that being on the left side of the ideological spectrum, and living in smaller communities, also leads to an elevated lenience for corruption. This is capturing the older generations shaped in the *cardenista* model accustomed to the *priista modus operandi*, who again see corruption as a necessary cost.

Table 8. Impact of Migrants on Corruption Attitudes, OLS Model

Variable	Model 1	
Receives Remittances	.020	(.070)
Lived in the USA	-.154*	(.085)
Thinking about leaving the country	-.022	(.070)
Knowledgeable	.049*	(.028)
Informed	-.005*	(.012)
Horizontal Trust	.043**	(.020)
Institutional Trust	-.006***	(.002)
Comm. Participation	-.011	(.009)
Current gov. support	-.007	(.028)
Ideological spectrum	-.003***	(.001)
Age	.001	(.002)
Gender	.041	(.051)
Education	-.015**	(.007)
Catholic	-.027	(.023)
Income	.010	(.011)
Current Economic Situation of the Country	.030	(.028)
Economic Forecast for the Country	-.005	(.040)
Unemployment	-.072	(.047)
Registered to vote	-.006	(.031)
Constant	5.76***	(.254)
Number of Observations	1238	
R ²	.0406	

Dependent Variable: political participation (see additive index)

All Prob>F 0.000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

In contrast, being part of a social network with people abroad is not enough to change people's attitudes on this score. Receiving remittances, in and of itself does little to modify people's interpretation of what corruption entails. Conversely, having lived abroad changes this

completely. This is crucial, because as we saw from the first table, these people are likely to be related. That is, those who left the country are likely to have received remittances themselves at a prior point. In effect, this table has the strongest suggestion of attitude adjustment among immigrants, because in essence it is capturing the same people at different points in their lives.

The reader might now consider the significance of our findings so far. The tables above have shown that individuals who receive remittances are more likely to partake in different political activities and have an elevated sense of support for individuals who actively criticize the government. On the other hand, the tables have also shown that having lived abroad matters for one's sense of efficacy and tolerance for corruption. Given the nature of the questions, this in effect suggests a further clue to how this process works. The latter two results are actually tapping into attitudes more prone to changing. As already discussed above, the immigration experience, even when relatively short can lead to a renewed sense of confidence, particularly when that person did so illegally, as one could hypothesize is at least partly the case for many of the data points in the survey. Moreover, as also mentioned, one of the obvious things a migrant is bound to perceive is the clear difference in the most immediate of political outcomes, namely that of public services. To be more precise, a migrant will probably notice the vast disparity in roads and infrastructure and conclude, however indirectly, that this probably has much to do with corruption. Since the questions used this very scenario, it is not surprising that having lived in the United States proved significant.

Likewise, the results associated with political participation and democratic attitudes hints that this process takes much longer, but that can be transmitted through social networks. This is because the variable that proves significant in these cases has no time constraints. We do not know how long they have been receiving remittances, or how long those abroad have been there.

We can, however, surmise a few things about those in the opposite end. Although it is true that the longer an individual stays in the United States, the less likely it is that person will send remittances, it is also true that many of those sending remittances have been abroad before, making them more likely to have shifted their political attitudes. Portes (1997) has also found that staying in the U.S. means more politicization and not necessarily waning interest in the country of origin, again suggesting that if they send remittances they would have more significant impact in their country of origin.

Hence, I would argue that the lack of significance from the United States variable should not be understood as contradicting the overall argument of this dissertation. In fact, I strongly suspect that a better dataset would, in fact, demonstrate that both factors mattered for the political outcomes analyzed here. This suggests a further research avenue.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The transnational literature has suggested a link between immigration and democratization, a phenomenon that some scholars have termed *social remittances*. And yet, scholars have been slow to scrutinize this relationship empirically, to a large extent because of a lack of data and difficulties in measuring its potential impact. This chapter has made an initial attempt through an approach from the political behavior literature. Specifically, the chapter argued that the immigration experience itself leads to a transformation in political attitudes, which in turn get transferred to the countries of origin through social networks and actual political participation when immigrants return home. Moreover, I have shown that having contact with those abroad

has an impact on political involvement whether or not one has more tolerance for those who disagree with the government's policy. This chapter also showed that having actually been abroad will have less tolerance for corruption attitudes. This, in effect, suggests that a hidden variable in the model, matters for the outcome, namely the length of time individuals spend abroad. Likewise, as I mentioned in passing throughout the chapter, my field research in Mexico also provided further evidence for the thesis of this dissertation and additional cues as to why and how this process operates and despite its presence has not as of yet revolutionized the country. Further research is needed to examine statistically whether migrants make elections more competitive at the aggregate level, and to what extent this occurs in places with high concentration of migrants and remittances, also to consider the implications in the field. This is where the dissertation now turns, in the next two chapters.

3.0 IMPACT OF MIGRANTS AT THE AGREGGATE LEVEL

As shown in the previous chapter, life experience in the US, or presence as a node in migrant social networks—as evidenced by the proxy of receiving remittances—has a considerable impact on the political attitudes of those individuals and on their subsequent political behavior in their Latin American countries of origin. The question remains, however, as to whether this has any significance in the aggregate. That is, to what extent does the influence on the political behavior at the individual level matter for political outcomes in the countries of origin? Does it make a difference at all, and if so, in which ways? The following chapter will use a case from our previous Latin American country set, namely Mexico, to explore these questions in terms of participation, electoral competitiveness, the power of third parties, party incumbency and specific partisan outcomes in the 2006 Presidential election.

Mexico provides a natural laboratory to test the laid out theories for a number of reasons. First, immigration data documenting the numbers of migrants who have returned and who remain in the US are nearly non-existent for most countries. Fortunately, CONAPO, the National Population Council of Mexico, carried out a census in 2000 to establish these figures for the country as a whole including the percentage of households which have migrants in the US or have returned to Mexico for all 2443 *municipios* in the country. Second, Mexican migrants have had a long presence in the US, and as such have already developed some institutional means to influence politics at the local level through the so-called hometown associations

(Alarcón 2000, Bada 2004, Graham 1997, Guarnizo 1998, Smith 2003). Thus, one would expect that if migrants have any prospect at all to influence the political outcomes in their country of origin, Mexico would be the ideal candidate. Third, unlike many other countries in Latin America, Mexico has had a long history of circular migration dating back to the Bracero program of the 1960s and earlier. This means that in contrast to a number of other countries which might send their people abroad only to never see them return, Mexico has potential to have enough of return migrants to affect politics. Finally, the sheer number of Mexican migrants in the US is impressive and continues to rise. As of this writing, it is estimated that 20 million Mexicans live in the US¹, about a sixth of the greater Mexican nation. In addition, the recent economic turmoil and the toughening of immigration policy has forced thousands to return, so that the country is facing an unprecedented number of return migrants. Again, more than any country in Latin America, Mexico provides the perfect laboratory to test our hypotheses.

3.1 THE ARGUMENT

As explained in detail in the theoretical chapter, migrants can act as the conduits of political values for a number of reasons. First, migrants are prone to changing their attitudes because of their youth, contextual influences and relationship with the host country and other immigrants. In fact, evidence that attitudes change as a result of socialization in the host country has already surfaced both directly (Camp 2003, Dancygier and Saunders 2006), and indirectly (Levitt and Waters 2002), but as I mentioned in the previous chapter no work has explored the impact of this

¹ This estimate includes individuals born in the US of Mexican parents and Mexican citizens living in the US legally or illegally.

socialization on their countries of origin. Second, the technological advances of the last twenty years allow migrants today to have more efficient means of maintaining contact with their homeland. Hence, cultural, economic and political ties do not necessarily become thinner overtime, as they once did with the diasporas of the early 20th century, and thus, the potential for these networks to transmit political ideas exists today, more than ever. Thus, to reiterate the argument: individuals migrate. This leads to the opportunity of attitude change concomitant to the local context and personal experience, which results in behavioral transformations. In turn, these ideas are channeled back to the country of origin, which, as a result, experiences political impact. This chapter will test this argument in one country of origin—Mexico—the extent to which this change has already occurred.

3.2 THE HYPOTHESES

Having shown the specific attitudes that change as a result of the migration experience to the United States and elsewhere in the previous chapter, the issue then becomes what particular political outcomes we might expect to change and in which ways. In electoral terms, first, one might consider the demand side. As discussed in the previous chapter, return migrants experience a higher political efficacy than those who never left the country. One of the reasons lies in the fact that having survived through the challenging ordeal of living in a country with unfamiliar culture and language—oftentimes without the benefit of having done so legally—migrants are more likely than their non-migrant neighbors of comparable social class, to feel that they are in charge of their own lives, and that they need not wait for fate to intervene. Moreover,

as we will discuss in detail in the qualitative chapter, migrants are likely to have altered demands on public goods, as having lived in developed countries makes them more sensitive than non-migrants to government service deficiencies. Hence, one often hears that as soon as they return, migrants routinely complain about the inadequacies in garbage management, and about the scarce respect for traffic regulations on the part of both regular citizens and authorities. Finally, as shown on the previous chapter, migrants are also likely to have contrasting views on democratic aspects of government, particularly as related to the legitimacy of people engaging in corrupt practices whether for personal or public gain.

From the above discussion, we can gather that migrants, given their sense of political efficacy, will be more likely to participate. Still, would their rate of participation increase equally across all electoral levels? Given that their altered demands tend to be of a local nature, and that they would have more access to the local process, one could expect that their participation would augment more at the local than national levels. Related to this, one could anticipate that migrants would be particularly sensitive to the local government performance and that they would not hesitate to hold the incumbent government accountable with their vote, especially if they perceive it as corrupt. Although the option to hold a specific individual accountable does not exist in Mexico, because of the reelection prohibition at all government levels, it can be reasonably assumed that voters will still display their displeasure against the incumbent party. Still, Levitt's theoretical model suggests that not all ideas will be transferred equally, and that the local receiving context actively shapes its impact. More specifically, she argues that the potential ramifications of social remittances depend on "the gender, class, and life-cycle stage of the receiver. Individuals with more resources and power, and who therefore control more aspects of their lives, have more freedom with which to accept or reject [social]

remittances.” (2001: 67). Translated to our aggregate model, one can hypothesize that the interaction of a *municipio*’s marginality will have an effect on the potential political outcomes. These two factors, then, can lead us to formulate our first two hypotheses on the demand side of electoral outcomes:

H₁ Participation at the local level will be higher in municipios with a larger number of migrants.

H₂ Rate of party incumbency will be lower in municipios with a larger number of migrants.

Following this line of thought, it could be expected that participation, altered demands and distinct political attitudes might have an impact on two other facets of the demand side of electoral outcomes, namely the competitiveness in elections and the voting percentage attained by smaller parties. First, in the case of the latter, one could hypothesize that as political opinion becomes more diverse and as the number of voters in search of accountability grows, parties will find it increasingly difficult to completely dominate electoral outcomes, and the local political fiefdoms that remain in the country will begin to be dismantled. I would expect this to be particularly true in places like Oaxaca and Puebla, where to this day, the PRI retains significant advantage over its rivals, mostly as a remnant of the ancien régime. The other side of this phenomenon is that return migrants could potentially find that none of the currently strong parties in their *municipio* truly address their new formulated concerns and demands, and thus they might pave the way for the growth in alternative parties. This is important because while at present the Mexican national landscape features three major parties, competition at the state level

usually remains between two, which in turn boosts the possibility of clientelistic ties and outright corruption. Thus, we can offer two additional hypotheses:

H₃ Competitiveness will be higher in municipios with a larger number of migrants .

H₄ Voting percentage for third parties will be higher in municipios with a larger number of migrants.

Finally, before moving on to the supply side of political outcomes, we should consider the role of the state governor in local elections. Presently, the *municipio* has little political power and depends almost entirely on funds allotted by the central and state governments. The latter gives a vast amount of power to the governor because although mandated to distribute them equally, they have enormous discretion on the matter. Furthermore, governors have every incentive to favor *municipios* run by the party or parties in their coalition, because it will not be long before they have to run for a completely different political office and they will need the blessing of their party for the nomination—something rarely done without strong local support. This is particularly true in the second half of their term when their political future will be decided. Given that all *presidentes municipales* terms last three years and run concurrently with the governor, those *municipios* run by the governor's coalition should receive more funds than their neighbors, all things being equal, in an effort to maintain fellow partisans in power at the local level.² From this, one could conclude that in the midterm state election for the local county executives, those candidates running under the party label of the governor's

² Of course, the governor might also engage in strategic allotting of funds to *municipios* which they believes could potentially come into the fold of his party, but doing that risks voters recognizing that the one responsible for the funds is the governor and not the *presidente municipal*.

coalition should be more likely to win. But what about the role of migrants, however? First, return migrants or even migrants living abroad that might influence the vote might not necessarily know about the additional public spending in the *municipio*. In fact, those individuals might judge the performance of their local government on considerations *different* than those of non-migrants. For example, they might consider to vote or not for the incumbent party based on issues pertaining much more to the ability of the local government, such as an efficient traffic control, a cleaner city, an accessible government and a non-corrupt police force. Here, I do not mean to imply that non-migrants might not consider those issues as well, the simple point is that they would weight those considerations differently. From this, we can derive our fifth and sixth hypotheses:

H₅ Incumbents will be more likely to be voted out of office in *municipios* with higher levels of migrants.

H₆ County executives of the same party as the governor will be more likely to be voted out of office in *municipios* with higher levels of migrants.

We can now look into the supply side of possible electoral outcomes. The first place we should look is the number of parties, and posing whether the political behavior changes brought about by migrants might generate new parties willing to channel this group's concerns. The Mexican context, however, does not provide fertile ground for the appearance of new parties based on migrants' demands. There are a number of reasons for this. First, although a growing part of the electorate, migrants as a political cleavage remains too small and localized to sustain a political party. Put another way, although potentially significant in shifting elections and providing accountability, no party could win an election based on their votes alone. Second, political issues that might be classified as of particular interest to migrants are already

part of the political discourse and all major parties support them. For example, all major political actors in Mexico support comprehensive immigration reform in the United States. The last two presidents and the partisan leaders in Congress have all spoken about the importance of Mexican migrants, with President Fox calling them heroes that make Mexico great with their efforts and remittances (Sánchez 2005). Moreover, the Mexican government has been particularly keen in developing programs that might interest migrants, including the Paisano program, which provides information and support for visiting migrants, and the three for one program, which matches every dollar remitted with three dollars from the local, state and central levels of government. Therefore, there would be little a new party could offer in terms of potential migrant issues.

Nevertheless, there is another supply side aspect that migrants do have the potential to have an impact, namely the number of candidates running at the local level. Although rare, state parties do exist in Mexico, as do six other smaller national parties. Depending on the local context, these parties have to choose whether to run independently or be part of a larger coalition generally associated with one of the three major parties. Certainly, the relative electoral strength plays a role in that decision, but oftentimes the decision lies on whether or not the party has a candidate and the minimum staff to run a campaign. This is where the migrants play a role because they might provide electoral strength either if migrants become disillusioned with the three major parties or find that none of them speak to their particular local concerns. Likewise, return migrants might provide a good recruiting source for candidates, both because they tend to be wealthier than their neighbors and because of their potential preference to enter politics but with a new political voice. In this way, we reach our final hypothesis:

H₇ The number of candidates will be higher in municipios with a larger number of migrants.

This can only hold true at the local level, given that in presidential elections all municipios must have, by law, the exact same number of candidates, while in elections for senators and deputies there is not enough variance across states. Having established the context, we can now move to the operationalization of our variables.

3.3 METHODS AND DATA

To test the above hypotheses, this chapter will employ two commonly used statistical models: Ordinary Least Squares and Logit Regression. The former will be used for the majority of tables given the continuous nature of most electoral variables at the *municipio* level, along with the Huber-White estimates for robust standard errors. The latter will be used for cases where the dependent variable is a dummy, as in the case of party incumbency. Let me now explain how each variable was constructed.

3.3.1 The dependent variables

All the dependent variables came from the electoral records kept by the IFE (*Instituto Federal Electoral*, Federal Electoral Institute), the independent board of elections, and its

equivalent at the state level, for all thirty two states in the country.⁴ To avoid endogeneity all elections used in the models occurred after 2000. In the case of local voting, I generally tried to use the election immediately after 2000, which for the most part happened to be the states' midterm elections.⁵

It is possible to explore the potential impact of migrants on participation because the IFE keeps a very meticulous *lista nominal* (list of registered voters) that is often revised and often recognized for its accuracy. Thus, participation is simply the actual number of votes divided by the number on the *lista nominal*. Regrettably, not all local state electoral boards keep as rigorous records as the IFE, so the dataset I used lacked participation data for some *municipios* in two states (Chiapas and Veracruz). Fortunately, this did not prevent the model from having enough data points with more than 1400 available from the other states.

Based on the elections described above, the incumbent party measure was a simple dummy variable coded 1 for the incumbent and 0 otherwise. In the case of coalitions, I considered it to be an incumbent if any of the parties from the previous coalition remained in office in the next election. This was a fairly simple exercise because there were no minor incumbent parties that either, stayed on by themselves, or switched alliances with another major party and won.⁷ Similarly, the governor's incumbent party was a dummy variable coded 1 for the incumbent and 0 otherwise. Here, I also deemed a party an incumbent if the political faction

⁴ This data has been compiled by a political consulting company and is available at: http://www.imocorp.com.mx/CAMPO/zSIEM/ELEC_X_ANIO/ResultadosWeb.asp

⁵ The specific elections I used were: Aguascalientes 2003, Baja California 2004, Baja California Sur 2005, Campeche 2003, Chiapas 2004, Chihuahua 2004, Coahuila 2005, Colima 2003, Distrito Federal 2003, Durango 2004, Guanajuato 2003, Guerrero 2005, Hidalgo 2005, Jalisco 2003, México 2003, Michoacán 2004, Morelos 2003, Nayarit 2005, Nuevo León 2003, Oaxaca 2004, Puebla 2004, Querétaro 2003, Quintana Roo 2005, San Luis Potosí 2003, Sinaloa 2004, Sonora 2003, Tabasco 2003, Tamaulipas 2004, Tlaxcala 2004, Veracruz 2004, Yucatán 2006, Zacatecas 2004. For national elections, I used the 2003 Legislative elections and the 2006 Presidential elections.

⁷ The major parties in question are the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), PAN (Partido Acción Nacional), or PRD (Partido Revolucionario Democrático).

that won the local midterm election belonged in the coalition that elected the governor. Again, in this case, there were no cases where a minority party in the governor's coalition won at the local level, while also alternating their alliance with another major party.

The competitiveness figure I used resulted from subtracting the vote percentages of the top two parties in the election. Therefore, the possible range could go from 0.1 to 100, with the former being the most competitive. I did the same for competitiveness at the national level. This was possible because the IFE's records include the electoral results disaggregated to the *municipio* level for both Congressional and Presidential elections. Likewise, I measured the power of third parties by adding the top two percentages and subtracting from 100, as indicated elsewhere (Moreno-Jaimes 2007). The resultant range expanded from 0 to 72%, the latter being the highest percentage obtained by third parties in any *municipio* in Mexico.

3.3.2 The independent variables

As mentioned at the outset, the main source of data for the independent variables of interest in this chapter comes from the migration records that CONAPO (*Consejo Nacional de Población*, National Population Council) developed for all *municipios* in Mexico. These figures, in turn, stem from additional work carried out during the 2000 census that interviewed 2.2 million households in the country.³ The dataset has information on a number of important theoretical facets of the dissertation using the household as the main unit of analysis. Specifically, the CONAPO statistics included the percentages of all households that received

³ The methodological details and data are available at <http://www.conapo.gob.mx>.

remittances, had migrants in the United States, and had return migrants, as well as circular migrants. The report defined the various groups in this manner. The figure on remittances included any household that had at least one member receive cash from individuals abroad. It did not include non-liquid assets. The data on migrants in the US comprised any households that had at least one member living permanently in American territory. The numbers on return migrants encompassed any households that had at least one member who had lived in the US for more than five years and now had a permanent address in Mexico. Finally, the statistics on circular migrants consisted of any households that had at least one member who had lived in the US for less than five years—that is, since the last census, and now resided in Mexico.

The rest of the independent variables were supplemented from other CONAPO datasets and the 2000 census data created by the INEGI (National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Information). Among these were control variables related to population, such as the female, indigenous, and catholic percentages for each *municipio* in the country. I should clarify, however, that the indigenous figure is not a raw measure of the whole indigenous population in the *municipio*, but rather a household based number that documents whether the main breadwinner in a household speaks an indigenous language. Moreover, I also included statistics related to employment and age distribution. Because no numbers for the unemployment rate at the *municipio* level exist in Mexico, I used employment figures that measured whether anyone regardless of age held a job that paid at least minimum wage.⁸ It should be noted, then, that these data do not distinguish between children and adults or between full and part time employment. Neither do they capture dissatisfaction with the job, variation in pay grades, or

⁸ The minimum wage in 2000 was \$97.35 per day (in 2002 pesos), roughly \$9.60 in today's (2008) dollars. Source: Secretaría del Trabajo and Banco de México.

whether people were actively pursuing jobs and were not hired.⁹ Likewise, it was theoretically important to incorporate a variable dealing with age distribution in the models given that those who leave the country tend to be younger, not to mention that only 18 year olds are allowed to vote, hence, any regressions that did not take this into account would be inaccurate. Therefore, I include the percentage for the adult population in all *municipios*.

The size of the *municipio* is in square kilometers. I chose to include this in the statistical models for two reasons. First, it could be argued that all things being equal, the spread of ideas would take longer to disseminate the larger the geographical area they had to cover. That is, two *municipios* with identical populations, migration rates and marginality, but varying size would not present the same opportunity for migrants' changed attitudes to influence local concerns and discourse. Second, no clear statistical figures to capture the urban/rural divide in the country exist. Using size and number of households, however, allows us to attain a better approximation. The *municipios*' geographical dimensions come from the INEGI and the *Enciclopedia de los municipios de México*.

In order to control for the potential level of opportunity and the wide differences among and within states in terms of wealth and marginality, I included in the models below four distinct measures: educational attainment gaps, marginality, human index and social development index. This is critical because we know that poverty matters both for electoral outcomes and for migration levels. Consequently, without a proper account of these dynamics any findings might be the result of these underlying factors rather than the impact of migrants' behavior.

The first one is a single measure. As the label might imply, the education number is the percentage of households that have at least one member which did not finish middle school

⁹ This was also the reason I did not simply subtract the employed population from the unemployed population to create an unemployment figure.

(*secundaria*). Although theoretically possible to have a *municipio* boasting a citizenry with 15% or less of households with a member that did not finish middle school, no such *municipio* exists in Mexico, hence the scale is actually between 34 and 100%. The last three are more complex indexes formulated by the National Population Council. The first one, marginality, is the result of an algorithm developed to capture the different aspects of poverty and its impact on Mexican communities. Accordingly, the numbers included the illiterate population older than 15, in addition to households without access to electricity, the sewer or the water system. It also took into account the level of crowdedness in households, whether or not the household contained dirt floors, the kind of income the household enjoyed, among others.¹⁰ Once this was determined, CONAPO used optimal stratification techniques to come up with specific cutoff points that would clearly differentiate the level of marginality between the *municipios*. These cutoff points yielded the following figures: Very Low (-2.44 / -1.28), Low (-1.28 / -0.69), Medium (-0.69 / -0.11), High (-0.11 / 1.05) and Very High (1.05 / 3.38) marginality levels. Thus, the actual possible margin is from -2.44 to 3.38, and in terms of the actual distribution, CONAPO identified 247 *municipios* with very high levels of marginality, 417 with high levels, 486 with medium levels, 986 with high levels, and 386 with very high.

The second of the complex figures is the human development index measure. This is reminiscent of the first but intended to capture the obstacles that individuals face in lieu of realizing their full potential as human beings. It comprises average life expectancy, likelihood of surviving the first year of life, GDP per capita counted in current dollars, average level of education and the quality of education in the *municipio* as expressed in number of teachers and schools available in the community. Finally, the social development index is a figure meant as a

¹⁰ Please see the Appendix for details.

more comprehensive measure of poverty and obstacles to social welfare. This one, in turn, takes into account the material used in the household's floor; the sex, age and level of education of the main breadwinner; whether or not any member of the household uses social services, whether or not individuals in the household own a stove, a car, or a fridge; the number of children under 12 in the household; the number of children between 5 and 15 who attend school; and the number of children between 5 and 15 who work. It also has equivalent cutoff points to the marginality figure which are as follows: 0.8 or more is high, 0.65 to 0.799 is medium high, 0.5 to 0.649 is medium low and anything below 0.5 is low. Thus, the actual range used in the table is .122 to .848.

From the above description, perhaps it could be argued that using all these figures in the statistical models could lead to multicollinearity given that they are intended to measure a similar underlying phenomenon. Although a valid concern, I decided to include them in the models for a number of reasons. First, while it is true that these numbers attempt to measure similar dynamics, they are not indistinguishable. That is, marginality might be highly correlated with gaps in educational attainment in a given *municipio*, but they are not *identical*. Second, the last three measures are not raw figures but complex indexes that CONAPO created with different weights according to different underlying statistical constructs. In other words, although a number for GDP per capita is also used in the human development index, the numbers are not equal, because in the latter it is a weighted part of a larger logarithm. Finally, as stated before, given the causal impact of poverty on both migration and certain aspects of political behavior, I wanted to have robust measures allowing us to discern the actual impact of migrants' changed political attitudes.

There are two other important variables to discuss. First, I included a dummy variable for the border region. The measure assigns a 1 to any *municipio* belonging to a state that borders the US, and 0 otherwise. Two theoretical reasons motivate this decision. First, scholars have recognized for some time political culture differences between the Mexican North and South. This is especially true for the states bordering the US, which tend to be wealthier and have long displayed an independent streak. It was here, for instance, that the PRI first lost its grip on the state governorships in Baja California and Chihuahua. It was also this region that produced the two major figures that altered the PRI's course in modern times, namely Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and Ernesto Zedillo.¹¹ Second, given the proximity to the United States, one might expect that more than any other region in the country, the average person in this area might come into contact with situations, social networks or political contexts reminiscent of those that lead migrants to shift their political attitudes. Therefore, it is necessary to control for any potential idiosyncrasy in this region.

Lastly, I included a measure for the number of crimes reported in a *municipio*. Crime has been a main concern in recent Mexican elections, and, as such, could be hypothesized to have an impact on participation and party incumbency. The ideal measure could be perhaps a figure that captured the *perception* of insecurity a *municipio* as a whole felt, unfortunately, no such number exists for the country as a whole. Another valid criticism is the expectation the crime statistics used in the models are probably underreported. While this seems a reasonable assumption, as already mentioned, no better figures exist. Having concluded the operationalization of our variables, we can now move on to the statistical models. This is what follows.

¹¹ Salinas grew up in Nuevo León, the state his father represented in the Mexican Senate. Zedillo grew up in Mexicali, Baja California where his family emigrated to when he was three.

3.4 DISCUSSION

Before engaging fully in the details of our statistical models, let us describe the descriptive aspects of the data so the reader may better understand some of the important conclusions reached. This is reported on table 1.

Table 9. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	St. Dv.	Min.	Max
Households	9267.216	28800.04	33	427592
Households (Remittances)	6.53	7.70	0	53.7
Households (USA)	6.35	6.85	0	46.7
Households (Return)	1.17	1.77	0	17.8
Marginality	-.001	1.00	-2.4	3.4
Educational Gap	89.2	30.1	34.0	100

The first thing to note is that although the mean is relatively low for all migrant measures, and particularly so for households with return migrants, the range is quite large for the first two and relatively high for return migrants. It should also be noted that the mean figure hides the geographical focus with which these figures manifest in real life. This is important because, while the numbers might be small, their compactness allows for more of an impact than a mean number might suggest. This is evident from the maps reported below. Figure 1, for instance,

reports the distribution of households with migrants in the United States as a function of state population.¹² As the reader can see, the number of migrants is not distributed equally across the country, but rather appears centralized, particularly around the states of Zacatecas, Guanajuato and Michoacán, states which not coincidentally have a large amount of migrant hometown organizations. The other two maps exhibit an analogous pattern, displaying in particular the low migrant figures for most of the Southeast. Nevertheless, it should also be observed that while highly correlated, the maps are not identical, and that a number of states do not have figures that match exactly.

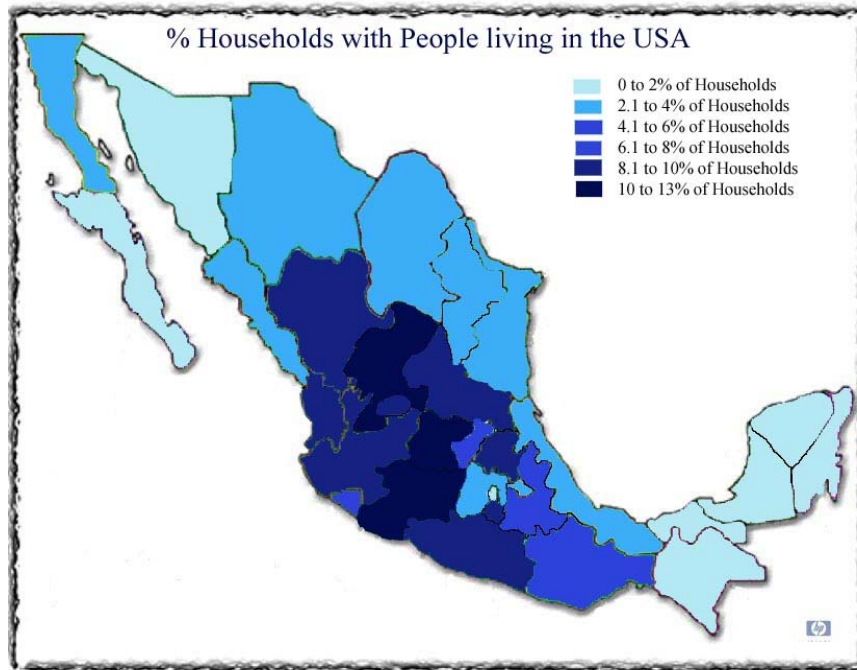


Figure 1. Mexican Households with Individuals Living in the USA

For example, Querétaro has almost 8% of its households with a member in the United States,

¹² Because these maps report the state population as a whole, the percentage range is much lower than in the *municipio* figures used in the statistical tables above.

but only 4% receive remittances. Likewise, Baja California, has a very low percentage of households with members in the US, but a very high number with return migrants.

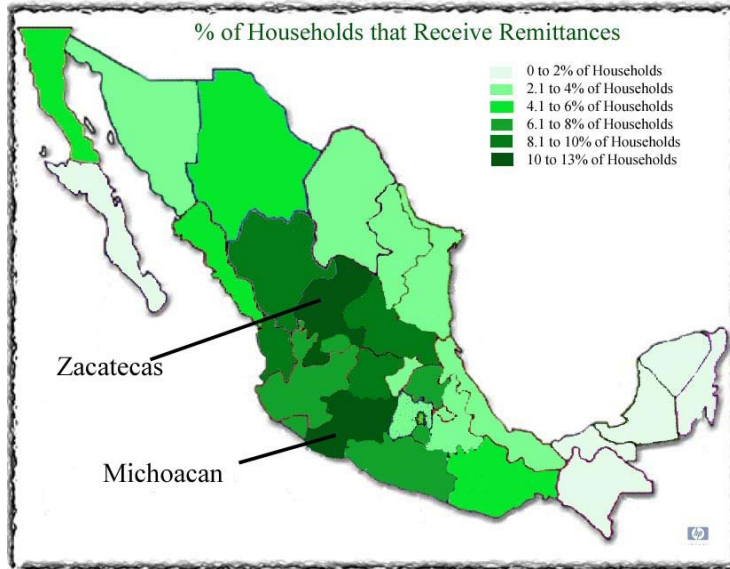


Figure 2. Mexican Households who Receive Remittances

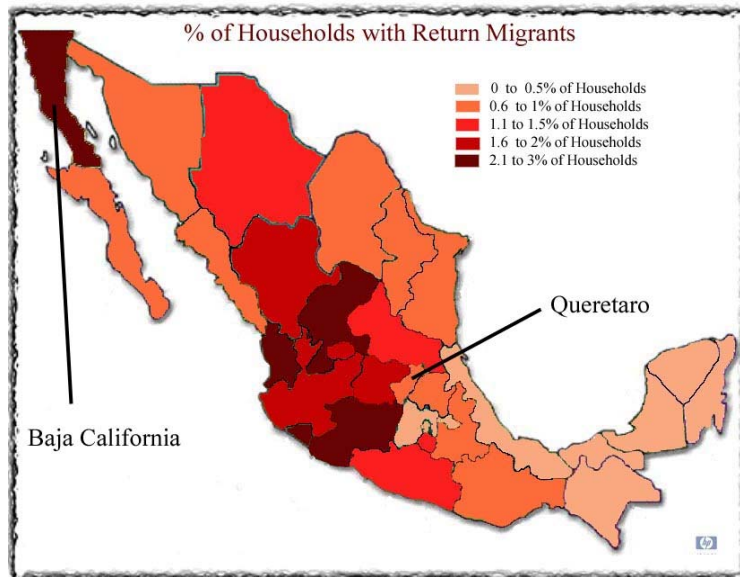


Figure 3. Mexican Households with Return Migrants

In regard to the non-migrant measures of importance in the statistical tables, the reader might conjecture as to their relationship. Specifically, the reader might speculate as to the nature of poverty in some of these *municipios*, and whether that is the cause for high number of migrants in the first place. To answer this question, the following graphs are provided.

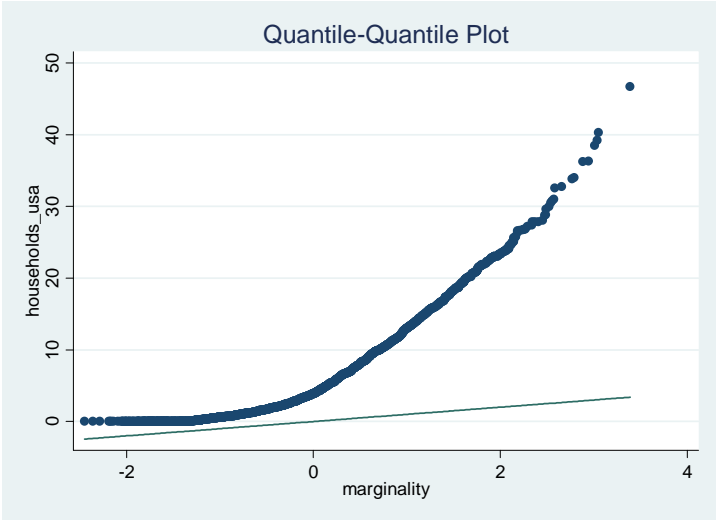


Figure 4. Marginality –Households USA

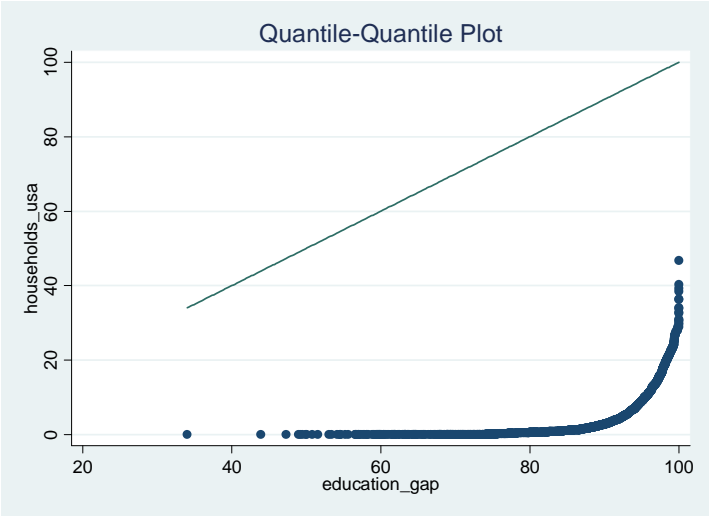


Figure 5. Education Gap – Households USA

As can be observed in these graphs, no perfect correlation exists, but rather a tipping point concentrated around a high level of marginality and broad gap in educational attainment. That is, while even at a low level of marginality households have members leaving for the United States, it is only once the marginality measure hits the medium level (near the -0.69 number) that the figure for households with migrants in the US explodes. Likewise, *municipios* where a large number of individuals have not completed their basic education is not associated with a large figure of households with migrants in the USA until the 90% figure, which non-coincidentally is also highly correlated with marginality levels.¹³ Thus, we can conclude that *municipios* with large number of households with members in the United States are more marginal than average, and have large percentages of their population that never completed high school (*secundaria*).

Having described the nature of the *municipios* we can proceed with the discussion. The investigation into the potential impact of migrants' social remittances should commence with one of the factors that proved significant at the individual level in the previous chapter, namely participation. Hence, the first table to consider is the OLS model in the figure reported below.

As it can be observed, the table consists of three different models. The first one contains the full regression without any interaction terms. The other two include the addition of local context interactions as suggested by Levitt's theoretical model. The initial thing the reader might notice is that the first model shows results that contradict our hypotheses, namely that households with return migrants and those in the US have a negative sign. This means that they are more likely to *not* vote in local elections. How can this be?

¹³ The correlation levels is 0.78.

It is certainly possible that the migration experience influenced people to the point that they would opt to exit of the political system altogether, either because they surmised that local voting would have little impact, or because they find it too corrupt. Likewise, a similar data problem to the one encountered in the previous chapter might exist. Both figures, for example, could hide discrepancies that make it look as though there is lower participation. This is because the figures are based on a voting list in *future* elections (those after 2000) and thus it might include individuals who are no longer in the country, or no longer in that *municipio*. The latter, I discovered is particularly true with return migrants who grow accustomed to a certain lifestyle and who initially might return to a rural area only to leave for a more urban setting as soon as possible. Before concluding this to be the case, it is worth looking at the other two models which interact the migrant measures with key aspects of the local context. The two interactive variables chosen here are chosen for a couple of reason. The first one, educational attainment gap, aims to capture the underlying inclination for individuals to accept or reject a potential social remittance. The second one, marginality, attempts to include the resource context where an idea might propagate faster. As explained in the introduction of the hypotheses, they also aim to capture Levitt's idea of class and the availability of resources. Once taken into we get some noteworthy results.

Table 10. Impact of Mexican Migrants on Political Participation at the Local Level, OLS Model

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Households	-.001*** (.001)	-.001*** (.001)	-.001*** (.001)
Households (Remittances)	-.102 (.062)	2.75** (1.31)	-.135** (.066)
Households (USA)	-.157** (.071)	-2.97** (1.20)	-.193*** (.069)
Households (Return)	-.585*** (.219)	-7.44* (4.33)	-.350* (.225)
% Female pop.	-1.19*** (.302)	1.05*** (.297)	-.951*** (.297)
% Indigenous household	.076*** (.016)	.074*** (.016)	.077*** (.017)
% Catholics pop.	.071** (.034)	.071** (.034)	.068** (.034)
% Employed	.094 (.070)	.132* (.071)	.151** (.073)
% Adults (over 18)	.545*** (.092)	.520*** (.094)	.526*** (.093)
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	-.001*** (.001)	-.001*** (.001)	-.001*** (.001)
% Educational att. gap	.327*** (.058)	.316*** (.062)	.397*** (.063)
Marginality	6.44*** (1.29)	6.37*** (1.31)	5.37*** (1.37)
Human Development Index	26.01** (11.63)	22.86* (11.69)	20.01* (11.39)
Social Development Index	32.98*** (9.58)	36.30*** (9.61)	37.27*** (9.59)
Crime Frequency	.003 (.002)	.003 (.002)	.003 (.002)
Border States	-5.75*** (.930)	-5.74*** (.925)	-5.63*** (.916)
Remittances X Ed. gap		-.032** (.014)	
USA X Ed. gap		.030** (.013)	
Return X Ed. gap		.076 (.047)	
Marginality X Remittances			-.210** (.107)
Marginality X USA			.251* (.096)
Marginality X Return			.671* (.373)
Constant	20.54	14.82	12.65
R ²	0.3207	0.3260	0.3281
Observations	1497	1497	1497

Dependent Variable: Participation in local elections for county executive (*presidente municipal*)

All F Prob= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10*

First, consider the interaction with an educational attainment gap. The reader might recall that this variable consists of households where at least one of their members has not

finished middle school (*secundaria*) and that its lowest possible point is 34. Thus, an examination of the interaction slope reveals that for each additional unit of remittances, where the gap is at its lowest, those *municipios* have 1.7% higher turnout. As the gap increases, so does the participation level, but it still remains significant and positive until the 75% range. If Mexico somehow managed to lower this education gap, each *municipio* could see even higher turnout. This is clearly shown in figure 6 below, which display the conditional coefficients for the interactions of the various migrant measures. Here, it should be noted that in all subsequent graphs, only the significant conditional coefficients will be reported, unless otherwise noted. Undoubtedly, the reader might be skeptical about what appears to be a miniscule addition to the voting turnout percentage. Still, one might note that in local races where turnout tends to be low in any case, this could, in fact, make much of a difference.

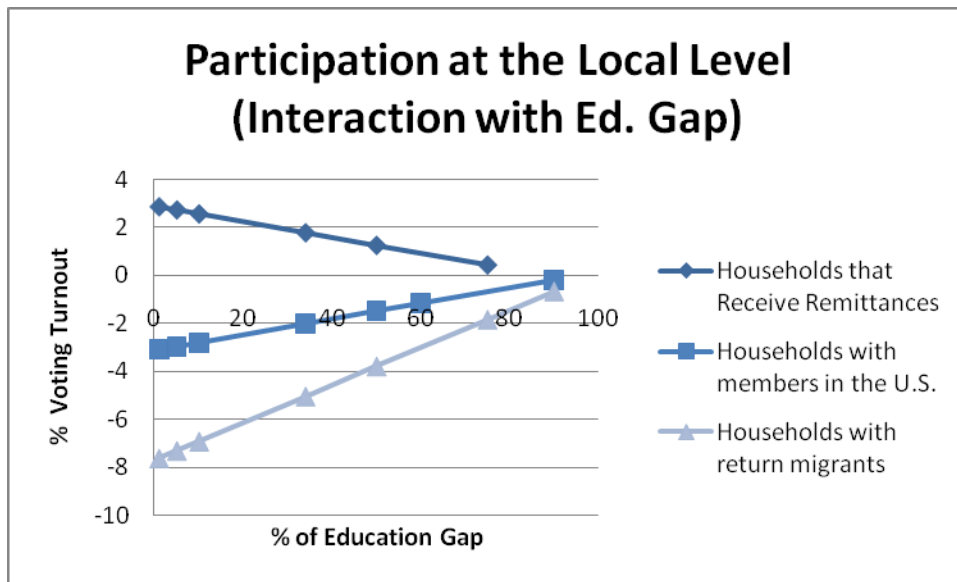


Figure 6. Impact of Migrants on Local Participation (Interaction with Ed. Gap)

(All coefficients significant to the .10 level)

Take the *municipio* of Ojocaliente, one of the *municipios* I visited in Zacatecas to carry out the qualitative work of this dissertation, for instance. In the election immediately prior to the time when these migrant figures were taken—the one for 1998—the county executive election was carried by 99 votes. A mere 2% additional voter turnout would have resulted in an additional 227 votes to dispute. The other two interactions are more nuanced. The variable for households with members in the US, for example, suggests that as the gap grows, the initial loss in voter turnout diminishes. This implies that as the population lags more and more in education, the voting turnout still dwindles but less so because of the influence of some of their citizens abroad, and those who have returned. Interestingly, return migrants seem to a much larger influence than migrants in the US. In fact, as migrants return to locations with wider and wider education gaps, voter turnout goes from a negative 5% to a less alarming negative 0.6%

On the other hand, the reader might rather consider the marginality interaction shown on Figure 7. To remind the reader, marginality is based on an algorithm created by the Mexican Census whereby a number of cutoff points describe various level of marginality. These are Very Low (-2.44 / -1.28), Low (-1.28 / -0.69), Medium (-0.69 / -0.11), High (-0.11 / 1.05) and Very High (1.05 / 3.38).

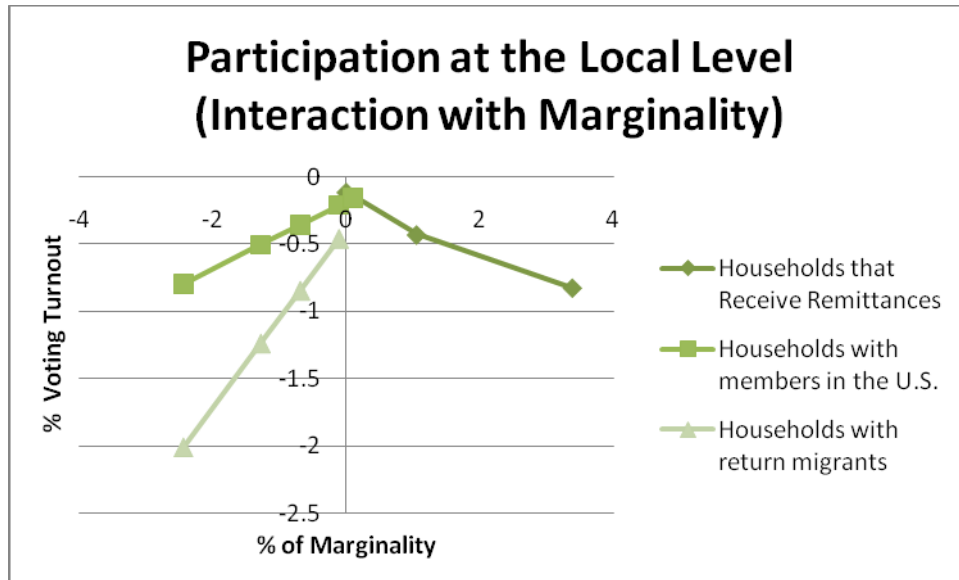


Figure 7. Impact of Migrants on Local Participation (Interaction with Marginality)

All coefficients significant to the 0.10 level

All of the subsequent graphs using marginality will use these cutoff points for reference. Let us now read the graph. Consider first the USA variable. Here, an additional percent of households with members in the U.S. coincides with what we found on the education gap interaction. That is, as marginality grows, Mexicans abroad have a negative impact on participation, but it diminishes the poorer the place becomes. This impact, however, becomes insignificant once the variable surpasses the medium level of marginality (-0.11). Likewise, Return Migrants has a similar impact, but once marginality becomes chronic, it becomes a positive effect. In the most marginal of places, in fact, it reaches a deceptively modest 0.6%. This is because these numbers in terms of local politics are huge. Again, to take another example from a place I visited to carry out field work, consider Domingo Arenas in Puebla. An additional 5.6% turnout rate in the election of 1998 would have produced an additional 309 votes, while that election's margin of victory was a mere 66 votes.

A more surprising outcome is the one shown by remittances. What we find is that as marginality becomes exceptionally high, so does voter absenteeism, the very opposite of what we found with education gap. This suggests that the lack of formal education might not be as important obstacle in creating political efficacy in some individuals than chronic poverty. Another interesting way to show this is to use King et. al.'s method (2000) to generate the predicted probabilities reported in the following table.

The first number reported is the probability when all other variables are held at their mean. The subsequent numbers are taking each of the independent variables of interest at various points, while holding all the other variables at their mean. What we find in the first model that has education gap interactions, the level of remittances is augmented, individuals increase their local participation. Contrast this with having migrants in the US, or individuals who have returned, who in fact, seem to lower participation.

Table 11. Predicted Probabilities for Participation at the Local Level

Model	Variable	Mean	1%	5%	10%
2. Interaction Educ. Gap	All variables at their mean	59.8			
	% of Households Remittances		40.6	52.2	66.8
	% of Households USA		61.5	60.4	59.0
	% of Households Return		60.3	55.9	50.3
3. Interaction Marginality	All variables at their mean	59.8			
	% of Household Remittances		60.6	60.2	59.9
	% of Households USA		60.9	60.2	59.3
	% of Households Return		60.4	58.9	57.0

The third model tells a slightly different story. While the remittances-marginality interaction remains negative, only one of the components retains a positive sign. If one inspects the slope of the line, maintaining marginality constant, but increasing the various migrant measures, they echo the previous model. This time, however, although remittances prove significant at initial levels, they are actually associated with a negative impact on participation. An inspection of the actual numbers for predicted probabilities exhibits an essentially flat rate for participation, and lowered participation when the *municipio* experiences higher percentages of migrants abroad, in addition to those who have returned. This suggests that remittances can contribute to an increase in participation, depending on the social context of the *municipio*.

Still, given the differences among the various migrant measures, it is necessary to consider the contrasting outcomes. How could it be, for example, that in the interaction between remittances and marginality, boosting the percentage of households that receive remittances lowers participation, while augmenting the number of households with individuals in the United States increases it? Does this not prove that remittances are not an appropriate social network proxy? Actually, the numbers reinforce it, and prove consistent with our hypotheses. Consider that the remittance interaction figures relayed earlier are controlling for both households with individuals in the US and households with return migrants. Consequently, the data is suggesting that enlarging the percentage of households while maintaining an equal number of households with migrants in the US and return migrants does little to boost participation, and in fact eventually lowers it. This is because, in effect, the same individuals would be acting as conduits for a larger amount of households, with an ever weakening connection, and thus, with little influence. This could be because enthusiasm for politics in poorer places tends to be lower, and thus, even a miniscule increase of citizens with a higher sense of political efficacy could lead to

increased turnout. On the other hand, lower participation by return migrants at the local level could be attributed to frustration with local authorities, distrust of the system, or an assimilation of the American trend, whereby national elections receive more interest from the electorate than local races.

To explore this further, I regressed identical variables, but using participation numbers at the national level, specifically from the 2003 election of the lower chamber deputies.¹³ Once more, we find that the remittance figure plays a significant role in the level of participation. Concretely, the figure suggests a 0.2% positive impact on participation. Again, this is a small amount to be sure, but one that could have a significant impact given the mixed electoral system that decides deputies in Mexico, which combines first past the post system with proportional representation. The other two figures, on the other hand, seem consistent with previous findings, as the US figure displays a negative sign, while the return migrant variable appears insignificant. Before concluding this to be the main migrant impact, it is necessary to look further within the interaction models.

Let us again look at the education gap interaction first. As shown on figure 8, a new pattern emerges, more congruous with the classic political behavior argument of resource availability (Verba and Nie 1972). That is, in all of the cases, the poorer the area, the more difficult it is for any social remittance aspect to take root. Still, wide differences exist. For instance, the remittance figure unveils a positive effect of nearly 0.3%, but only where the gap covers roughly 80% of the households in the *municipio*, which then declines gradually. Elsewhere, the variable for those in the U.S. maintains a nearly identical pattern to that shown

¹³ Chamber deputies in Mexico are elected every three years and cannot run for reelection. Senators run concurrently with the President and enjoy six year terms.

previously, to the point where at the lowest point in the education gap, those abroad contribute a 1.7% lower turnout. Return migrants show an absolute contrast. At the lowest point in education attainment gap, return migrants chip in an eye-popping 8.9% to political participation. In fact, although it follows an overall decreasing pattern, it maintains its positive significance well past the mean, to a still impressive 1.7% where the gap covers 80% of the households.

Table 12. Impact of Migrants on Political Participation at the National Level, OLS Model

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Households	-.001*** (.001)	-.001*** (.001)	-.001*** (.001)
Households (Remittances)	.279*** (.075)	5.69 (1.25)	.215*** (.076)
Households (USA)	-.199*** (.078)	-1.90 (1.21)	-.161** (.079)
Households (Return)	-.183 (.253)	14.1*** (4.18)	-.154 (.247)
% Female pop.	-1.30*** (.276)	-1.27*** (.280)	-.129*** (.279)
% Indigenous household	.072*** (.014)	.071*** (.013)	.069*** (.013)
% Catholics pop.	.154*** (.029)	.146*** (.029)	.149*** (.029)
% Employed	.037 (.069)	.007 (.071)	-.003** (.071)
% Adults (over 18)	.166** (.085)	.228** (.086)	.205** (.085)
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)
% Educational att. gap	.159*** (.055)	.298** (.057)	.122** (.057)
Marginality	7.00*** (1.19)	7.33*** (1.19)	7.93** (1.24)
Human Development Index	46.20*** (12.23)	47.53*** (12.15)	51.19* (12.14)
Social Development Index	40.74*** (8.83)	40.56*** (8.81)	38.86*** (8.83)
Crime Frequency	-.001 (.002)	-.002 (.002)	-.001 (.002)
Border States	1.78 (1.16)	1.08 (1.16)	1.13 (1.16)
Remittances X Ed. gap		-.003 (.014)	
USA X Ed. gap		.019 (.013)	
Return X Ed. gap		-.155*** (.045)	
Marginality X Remittances			-.202* (.112)
Marginality X USA			.292*** (.101)
Marginality X Return			-1.11*** (.347)
Constant	15.78	8.13	15.25
R ²	0.1120	0.1223	0.1254
Observations	2028	2028	2028

Dependent Variable: Participation in elections for Chamber of Deputies (*Cámara de Diputados*)

All F Prob= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10*

This result is consistent with Levitt’s social remittances theoretical underpinnings, but the point goes beyond that. As we contrast this with the previous finding for local participation, what we have is individuals returning who opt to exit out of local electoral politics, but who find it important to participate in national elections. The marginality interaction adds to this insight.

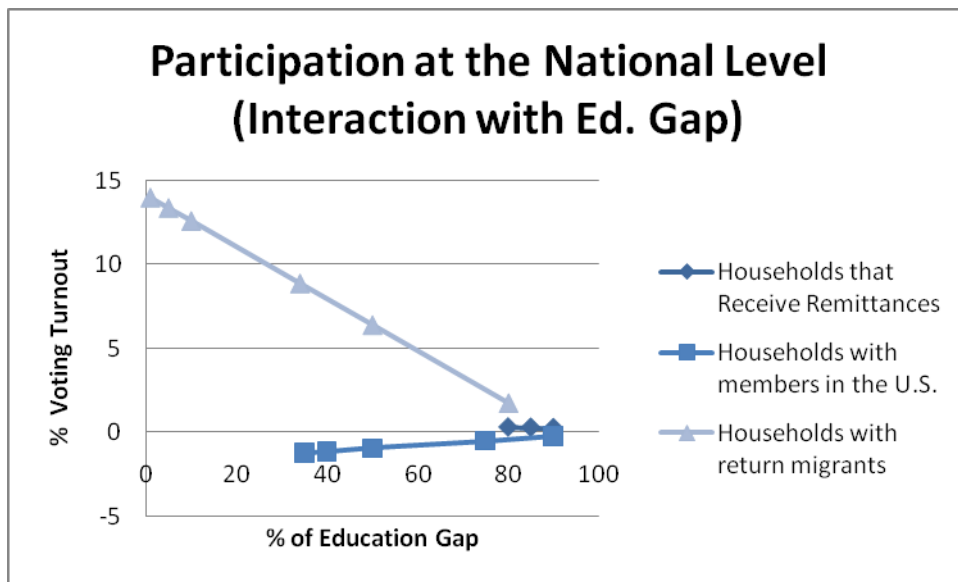


Figure 8. Impact of Migrants on National Participation (Interaction with Ed. Gap)

All coefficients significant to the .10 level

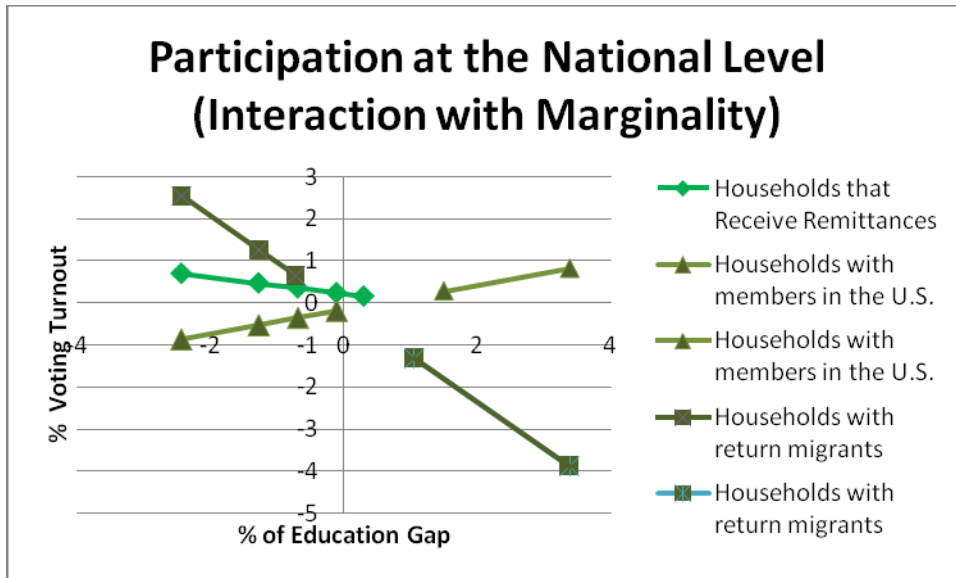


Figure 9. Impact of Migrants on National Participation (Interaction with Marginality)

All coefficients significant to the .10 level

The pattern here is similar with generally positive results. First, remittances are associated with higher turnout, as much as 0.7% at the lowest levels of marginality, and then decline rapidly and become insignificant at the point where marginality hits a medium point. The Households with U.S. connection maintain their pattern of initial negative turnout, but after some insignificance in the relatively high level of marginality, a positive effect emerges reaching as much as 0.8% at the very highest levels of poverty. Just as important, return migrants echo the previous pattern where better off areas seem to be sensitive to potential influence, and have an initial 2.5% boost in participation. Still, they are not impervious to the problems of impoverished areas, and at highest levels of marginality, bring about a 3% decline in voting.

On the other hand, if we explore the predicted probabilities for this table, we find that the results also resemble earlier results for remittances, but not for return migrants. Once more, the higher percentage of households that receive remittances is associated with additional voting

turnout, but so are return migrants. In fact, in examining the predictive probabilities one finds that increasing the percentage of return migrants increases the likelihood of voter turnout more dramatically than do remittances. On the other hand, having more individuals in the United States does not make much of a difference, as the interaction proves insignificant, and thus the predicted probabilities are not reported.

Table 13. Predicted Probabilities for Participation at the National Level

Model	Variable	Mean	1%	5%	10%
2.	All variables at their mean	42.6			
Interaction					
Educ. Gap	% of Households Remittances		39.3	41.6	44.4
	% of Households Return		42.5	47.4	53.8
3.	All variables at their mean	42.6			
Interaction					
Marginality	% of Households Remittances		41.3	42.2	43.3
	% of Households USA		42.8	42.8	41.5

Analogous to this discussion is the third model, where the interaction for remittances and marginality shows a similar outline to that observed at the local level. Remittances prove significant and contribute to increased participation. Having household members abroad does initially lead to some added participation, but then falls flat and eventually grows smaller. Finally, the interaction with return migrants and marginality does not appear significant at the national level. Thus, the models suggest that return migrants matter more in *municipios* with acute education gaps, rather than in underprivileged areas.

Let us now consider the following table, which looks at the likelihood that an incumbent party will retain office in the next election. Here, three models were included, one as a simple regression with no interactions, and two with various interactions. First, let us introduce an additional interaction measure. Given some of the negative results, a more systematic way to unearth whether these findings have more to do with faulty data than with an accurate reading of reality, is to interact the migrant measures with each other. Combining the figures in this way, would be able to create a more precise estimate of the total impact of migrant influence.

The first regression shows that remittances do increase the likelihood that an incumbent party will retain office. This has to do with the more recent institutional nature of remittances. The Mexican government has actively tried to lure more remittances to the country, particularly those that might finance public works. To do this they have instituted a system of collective remittances where known as the 3 for 1 program, where for every one dollar sent to the town, the state and the federal government would contribute \$2 additional dollars. This has a dramatic impact on the budget of any *municipio*, and if done adroitly, the residents would credit both migrants and the local county executive. A good relationship between the two would lead to at least some support from abroad, and thus it would increase the likelihood of an incumbent party retaining office.

Table 14. Impact of Migrants on Incumbent Party's Chances for Reelection, Logit Model

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Households	.000 (.000)	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)
Households (Remittances)	.043*** (.015)	.077*** (.025)	.222 (.248)
Households (USA)	-.007 (.016)	.011 (.018)	-.452* (.245)
Households (Return)	-.047 (.051)	-.250** (.112)	.170 (.770)
% Female pop.	-.104** (.049)	-.124** (.050)	-.105** (.049)
% Indigenous household	.002 (.003)	.003 (.003)	.003 (.003)
% Catholics pop.	-.014** (.005)	-.014** (.005)	-.014** (.005)
% Employed	-.031** (.014)	-.031** (.014)	-.027** (.014)
% Adults (over 18)	.019 (.017)	.016 (.018)	.013 (.018)
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)
% Educational Att. gap	-.049*** (.011)	-.048*** (.011)	-.059*** (.011)
Marginality	.150 (.246)	.126 (.247)	.148 (.246)
Human Development Index	-.447 (2.30)	-.639 (2.32)	.148 (2.30)
Social Development Index	-1.64 (1.88)	-1.39 (1.89)	-1.46 (1.88)
Crime	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)
Border States	.838*** (.185)	.850*** (.186)	.810** (.187)
Remittances X Return		-.001** (.001)	
Remittances X USA		.002 (.001)	
Return X USA		.010 (.007)	
Marginality X Remittances			-.002 (.003)
Marginality X USA			.005* (.003)
Marginality X Return			.001 (.008)
Constant	11.02**	12.12***	11.94***
Pseudo R2	0.0380	0.0404	0.0408

Dependent Variable: Incumbent retains office

Number of observations = 1826

All Prob $\chi^2 = 0.0000$

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

To examine this more closely, it is again necessary to explore the interaction terms. First, we can look at the migrant measure interactions. As the reader will notice, this interaction exhibits parallel results. First, in a combination with the other figures, remittances do have a positive impact on an incumbent party's chances, but only to the 25% level or so. This means that for each additional unit of remittances, an incumbent party will maintain an advantage as long as the combined level of return migrants and households with individuals in the US remains below the 25%. The U.S. variable turned out insignificant, but the return migrant figure shows an opposite result as long as the combined migrant measures stay below 15%.

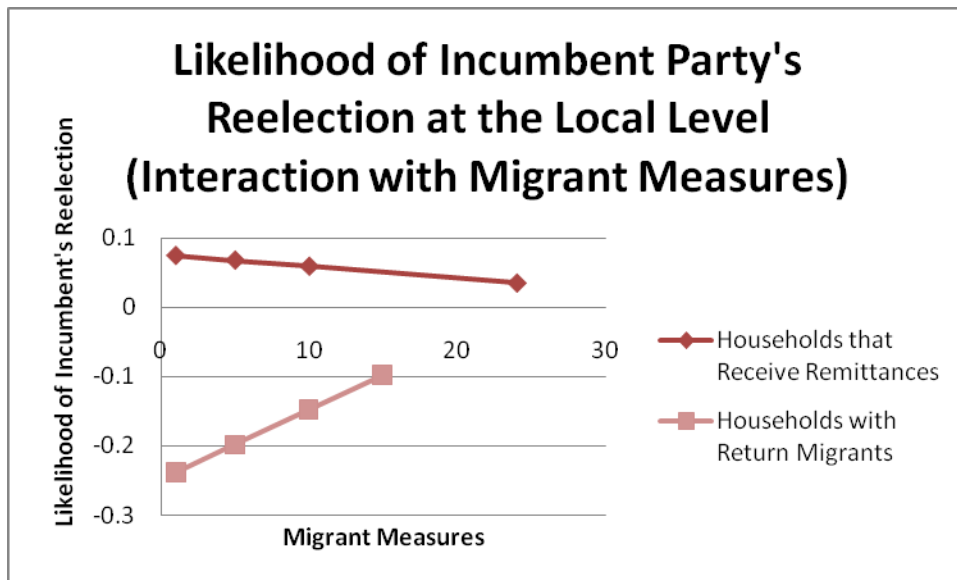


Figure 10. Impact of Migrants on Likelihood of Incumbent's Reelection (Migrant Measures Interaction)

All coefficients significant to the .10 level

This suggests that return migrants are, in fact, judging the work of the incumbent party on a *different* dimension than those that have stayed behind. A higher level of reelection for *municipios* with higher remittances, on the other hand, could be that individuals credit the mayor with some of those very funds. This is further corroborated by a marginality interaction (not reported), where a higher level of marginality is also associated with reelection, and also an education gap interaction which displays that the higher the level of households with people leaving for the US the more likely the incumbent party will be voted out of office.

The predicted probabilities add to this story. In the initial model we find that households level of remittances are more likely to retain the incumbent party in office, but the other two independent variables of interest prove insignificant. One of the reasons behind this, given the constraints on reelection and the relatively short term, could be that voters feel the best option is to expand the party's time in power.

The second model aimed at capturing the combined effects of our independent variables of interest. The results substantiate prior findings. For instance, a relatively equal amount of remittances with individuals abroad has an initial effect on voting out the incumbents, but as the percentage of households receiving money grow, the likelihood that the incumbent party will remain in office grows. This echoes our suspicions that as migrants have an ever larger amount of households to influence, their political sway lessens. The inverse relationship is also true, but insignificant. Likewise, having a raise in the number of return migrants while holding remittances and migrants abroad constant, has a negative relationship with party incumbents. In other words, *municipios* with a larger amount of return migrants are more likely to vote incumbents out.

In the third model, once interacted with a education gap, we find that remittances does boost the likelihood that the incumbent will remain in office, but only where the lack of education is most pronounced. That is, the interaction proves significant when remittances remain constant, and the education gap varies, but not vice-versa. This, in effect, means that a mere higher level of remittances in the *municipio* will not translate to the incumbent party retaining local power, despite the numbers in the predicted probabilities. The inverse relationship is present with return migrants, where their impact on the likelihood of a party staying in power is higher in places with low education, but merely augmenting their numbers does not suffice. Nevertheless, the predicted variables reported below do have some interesting points. Notice in particular the dramatic reduction in party incumbency when the number of return migrants goes up in the second model.

Table 15. Predicted Probabilities for an Incumbent Party Retaining Office

Model	Variable	Mean	1%	5%	10%
2.	All variables at their mean	42.3			
Interaction					
Remittances	% of Households Remittances		31.80	38.81	48.33
	% of Households USA		40.89	41.92	43.24
	% of Households Return		43.82	22.86	10.06
3.	All variables at their mean	42.3			
Interaction					
Educ. Gap	% of Households Remittances		23.2	33.23	58.06
	% of Households USA		85.10	59.00	15.26
	% of Households Return		43.32	38.68	39.11

Contrast this with the results for the following table, a model with various logit regressions examining whether or not voters in areas with high migrant influence will vote for parties in the governor's coalition. To remind the reader, this point is tested because we hypothesized at the outset that return migrants will judge differently given their lack of familiarity with the potential local work of the governor's coalition.

Table 16. Impact of Migrants on Governor's Coalitions' Fortunes at the Local Level, OLS model

Variable	Model 1		Model 2	
Households	.001	(.001)	.001	(.001)
Households (Remittances)	-.026	(.017)	-.093***	(.030)
Households (USA)	.006	(.017)	.020	(.019)
Households (Return)	.006	(.060)	.013	(.127)
% Female pop.	.063	(.054)	.061	(.053)
% Indigenous pop.	-.005	(.004)	-.006	(.004)
% Catholics pop.	.010	(.007)	.012	(.007)
% Employed	-.012	(.016)	-.013	(.016)
% Adults (over 18)	-.022	(.020)	-.025	(.020)
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	.001***	(.000)	.001**	(.000)
% Educational Attainment gap	.003	(.012)	.009	(.011)
Marginality	.064	(.285)	.021	(.271)
Human Development Index	.833	(2.58)	1.43	(2.60)
Social Development Index	-1.00	(2.04)	-.812	(2.03)
Border States	.675***	(.200)	.636**	(.199)
Crime	.001	(.001)	-.001	(.001)
Remittances X USA	.002*	(.001)		
Remittances X Return	.005**	(.002)		
Return X USA	-.011	(.008)		
Marginality X Remittances			-.014	(.024)
Marginality X USA			-.031	(.023)
Marginality X Return			.193**	(.081)
Constant	-2.88		-3.39	
Pseudo R ²	0.0237		0.0282	
Observations	1459		1459	

Dependent Variable: Governor's Coalition

All F Prob= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

Let us analyze the various interaction levels. As the graphs reveal below, the interaction of the migrant measures shows a negative coefficient for both remittances and return migrants. In the case of the latter, return migrants have not only a distinct set of issues by which they measure the incumbent party, but they might not recognize that the party in charge is one that belonged to the Governor. The difference is that the remittance figure appears significant only at the initial levels where the combined impact of return migrants and households with people in the US surpass the 8% level, while the return migrants variable shows up as significant well into the 50% level. This means that although one might expect a popular governor to win more *municipios* halfway through their tenure, the impact of migrants would yield the exact opposite. For example, in one of the highest migrant states in the country, Zacatecas, the popularity of its governor Amalia Garcia elected in 2004, did little to keep many *municipios* in the 2007 cycle. In fact, the PRD went from 29 county executives to 18, more than a third loss.

This becomes evident on figures 11 and 12, where the latter also shows that return migrants will diminish the chances of a member of the governor's coalition to be reelected, although not so for the U.S.

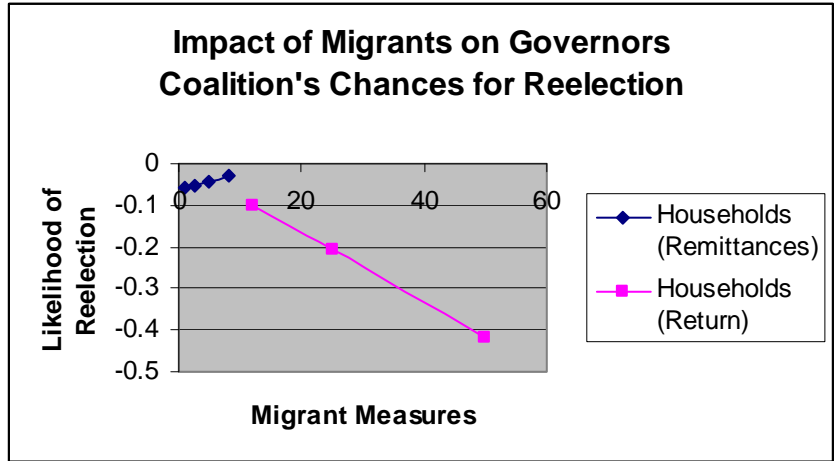


Figure 11. Impact of Migrants on the Governor's Coalitions' Reelection Chances (Marginality)

All coefficients significant to the .10 level

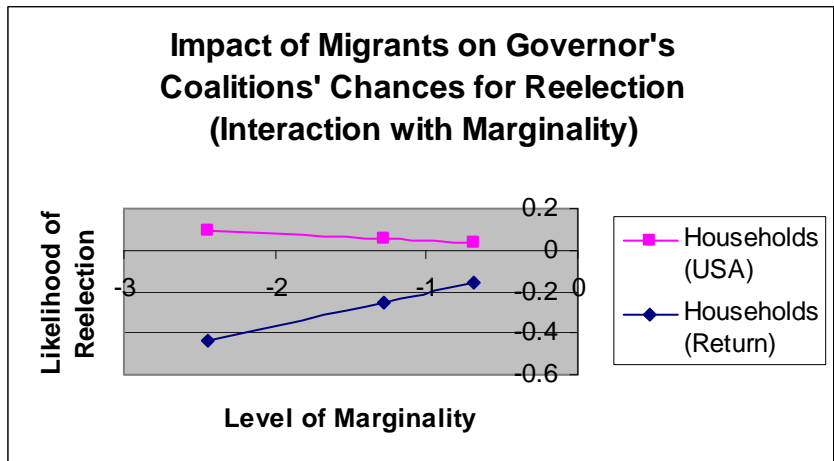


Figure 12. Impact of Migrants on the Governor's Coalitions' Chances (Marginality)

All coefficients significant to the .10 level

Something similar appears on the predicted probability tables reported below. For instance, in the first model dealing with encompassing marginality interactions, *municipios* with a higher number of return migrants are actually more likely to vote for parties in the governor's

coalition. The other two figures prove insignificant. Elsewhere, the other two models prove the importance of remittances as political factors. Both suggest that as remittances grow and the other two numbers remain constant, voters' preferences move beyond those parties within the governor's coalition. This suggests two interesting points not originally considered. First, while return migrants do not act as hypothesized at the outset, they do, in fact, alter political outcomes in their home country. This is an important finding, regardless of the theoretical underpinnings. Second, remittances can act as more than mere social network proxys, but suggest that money alters what voters consider. In sum, when remittances bring in additional income to a given *municipio*, the governor's efforts might not be as noticeable, or even as desirable. The predicted probabilities further illustrate this for all three different models in the table.

Table 17. Predicted Probabilities for the Likelihood a Member of the Governor's Coalition Will Keep Office

Model	Variable	Mean	1%	5%	10%
1.	All variables at their mean	50.6			
	% of Households Return		50.51	50.59	51.52
2.	All variables at their mean	50.6			
	% of Households Remittances		65.10	56.61	45.32

The next results to be examined relate to the level of electoral competitiveness at the local and national level. First, let us take note of the competition dynamics in *presidente municipal* races. The initial tables have suggested that migrants do have an impact on the fortunes of specific parties. An increased turnout, for example, might make an otherwise

comfortable victory, a race that becomes more than a foregone conclusion. This is important because as remarked earlier, an increase in competition can make institutions more responsive to their constituents. Given the institutional nature of Mexican politics where no reelection is allowed, and where politicians owe their election largely to party bosses rather than constituents, an added amount of competition at the local level could have important repercussions.

This very characteristic appears in the opening statistical model of table 18, as it shows that two of our independent variables of interest prove significant. To wit, having an additional amount of remittances or return migrants result in more competitive local elections. In fact, for every additional percentage of households with return migrants in the *municipio* an equivalent 0.8% gets deducted from the voting difference between the winning candidate and the runners-up, while the comparable figure for households with remittances is nearly a 0.3%. Hence, migrants not only lead to more electoral competition, but also can tilt elections in closely fought elections at the local level. Still, the consequence of this finding goes beyond the migrant's ability to actually tip elections to a competing party.

Table 18. Impact of Mexican Migrants on Competitiveness at the Local Level, OLS model

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	
Households	-0.001*** (.001)	.001*** (.001)	.001*** (.001)	
Households (Remittances)	-0.284*** (.096)	-0.532*** (.163)	-0.374*** (.094)	
Households (USA)	.071 (.101)	.072 (.114)	.208** (.099)	
Households (Return)	-0.808** (.322)	1.14 (.707)	-1.34*** (.315)	
% Female pop.	.812*** (.269)	1.06*** (.270)	.705*** (.269)	%
Indigenous household	-.045** (.019)	-.048** (.020)	-.066*** (.022)	
% Catholics pop.	.030 (.036)	.025 (.037)	.042 (.036)	
% Employed	-.007 (.087)	-.004 (.086)	-.134 (.088)	
% Adults (over 18)	-.160 (.103)	-.112 (.105)	-.093 (.102)	
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)	
% Educational Att. Gap	-.290*** (.068)	-.296** (.069)	-.408*** (.070)	
Marginality	-5.06*** (1.55)	-4.83*** (1.55)	-2.04*** (1.60)	
Human Development Index	-75.5*** (14.25)	-74.6*** (14.20)	-65.8*** (14.07)	
Social Development Index	12.77 (11.80)	9.70 (11.76)	7.84 (11.6)	
Crime Frequency	-.001 (.003)	.002 (.003)	-.002 (.003)	
Border States	-12.9*** (.947)	-13.0*** (.949)	-13.4*** (.046)	
Remittances X USA		.014 (.009)		
Remittances X Return		-.005*** (.001)		
Return X USA		-.079* (.042)		
Marginality X Remittances			-.024 (.133)	
Marginality X USA			-.123 (.116)	
Marginality X Return			-1.77*** (.412)	
Constant	61.86***	48.69**	72.79***	
R ²	0.1784	0.1875	0.2023	
Observations	1810	1810	1810	

Dependent Variable: Level of competitiveness at the local level

All F Prob= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

Even in elections where their numbers do not suffice, or where margins of victory diminish only slightly, political parties must take these new demands into account if they want to assure future success. Elsewhere, the interactions present in the regressions also paint an interesting picture. First, in our conditional coefficients for the migrant measure interactions we find that all three of the independent variables of interest are associated with more competitive local elections. The least effective, the number of remittances subtracts only tenths of a percent

to the margin of victory. The other two, however, have a steeper effect. An additional unit of households with members in the U.S., for instance, when combined with the other two migrant measures adds nearly a percentage point once the migrants' figures reach 12%, and at its maximum, it can moderate the margin of victory by roughly 3.5%. Similarly, the figure for return migrants does not prove significant before the 20% level, but if it reaches similar levels of voter participation subtracting slightly over %3 at the mean of the migrant measures.

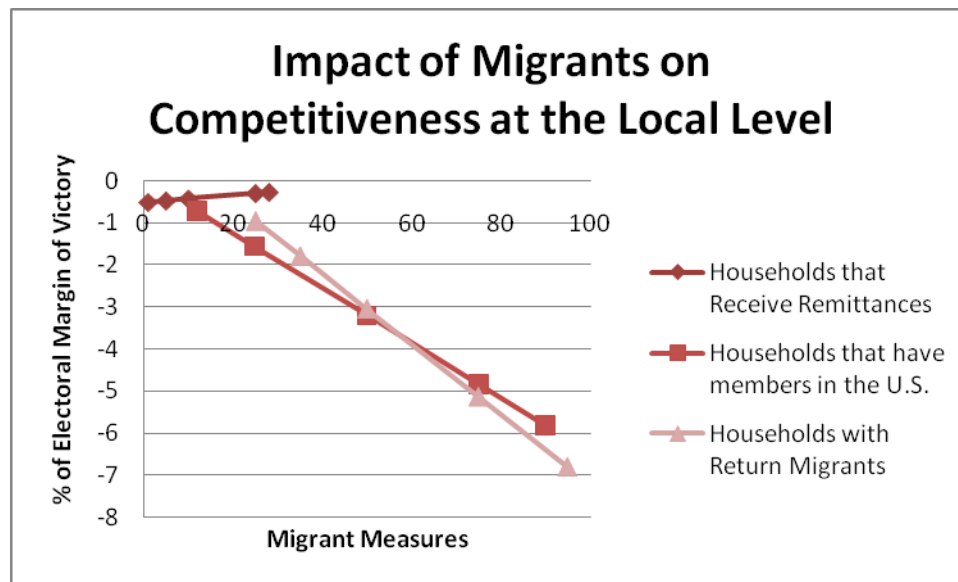


Figure 13. Impact of Migrants on Electoral Competitiveness at the Local Level (Interaction with Migrant Measures)

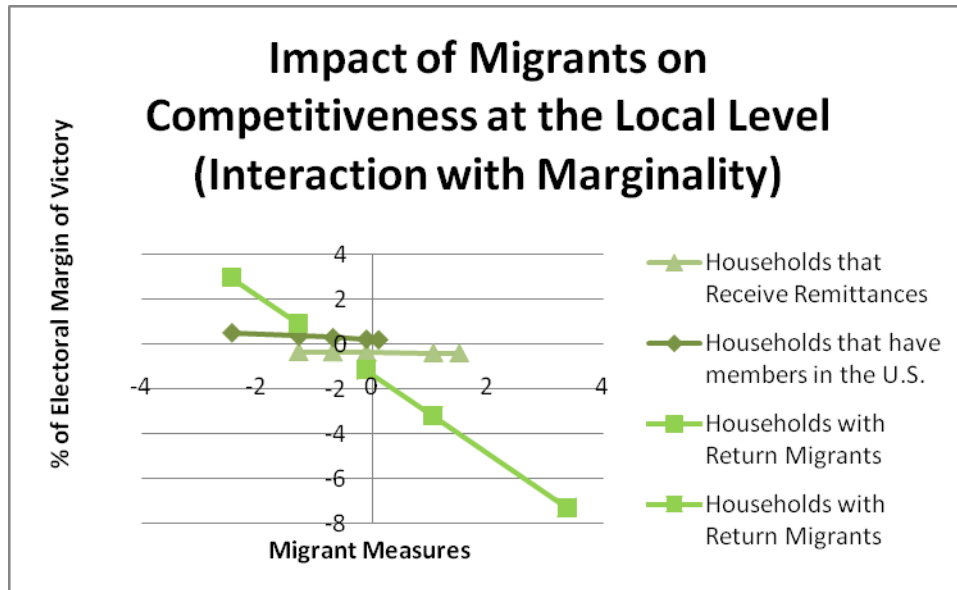


Figure 14. Impact of Migrants on Electoral Competitiveness at the Local Level (Interaction with Marginality)

Meanwhile, the marginality interaction tells a more complicated story. The remittance variable does show that elections become more competitive at all levels of marginality, although it tapers off as the latter expands. Still, even in the poorest of places an additional unit of remittances, leads to an important decrease of 2.6% points to the margin of victory. While the US variable shows a larger margin of victory at a medium level of marginality, return migrants clearly show that as marginality increases the opposite happens to the electoral margin of victory. Large parts of Mexico fit this description, as more migrants return to Mexico given the present downturn in the economy, and the new immigration tactics, a boost in the level of competitiveness could be felt in large parts of the country.

Return migrants, then, seem to act as an important counterweight in local politics. So far we have found that in a grouping with medium marginality they boost voter turnout, they matter for the incumbent party's fortunes—whether or not they are part of the governor's coalition.

Still, a potential criticism of these observations is that competition at the local level has something to do with the precise availability of candidates. That is, the reason why migrants have any influence lies not in some alternative political socialization as a result of the migration experience, but rather, derives from the wide variance in quality of candidates across *municipios*. It could be, for instance, that migrants matter because the places where they are plentiful, either lack quality candidates because they are all abroad, or that they enjoy a better-than-average grouping of aspirants because of the region's connection to the outside world. Therefore, it could be argued that local level races were competitive either because voters' choices were limited to weak contenders, or because the candidates were so exceptional, it was difficult to select among them. All of which happened to be correlated with places with higher than normal return migrants. In order to address this criticism, we should look at races where the candidates remain constant and then across all *municipios*, which is what the next table addresses.

Contrast the results in table 19 with those at the local level. In this case, we find that migrants' influence does not come through in the models with each of the variables taken into account separately. Once we consider the interaction between the migrant variables, we uncover dynamics comparable to those observed at the local level, but only for these, and not for those related to marginality or education gap—the latter not reported. The migrant measure interaction, however, does support our hypothesis and the telling of our story. Specifically, we find that when the variable for migrants in the US is combined with the other two, at its mean it can lower a 0.03% from the margin of victory, but as this amount swells the figure grows rapidly. That is, it can erase as much as 4% from the margin of victory at its maximum existing point. Likewise, return migrants do prove significant, and where the other two migrant measures reach 50% or more, it translates to a 3% to 4% more competitive election at the national level.

Table 19. Impact of Migrants on Level of Competition at the National Level, OLS model

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Households	.001	(.001)	.001	(.001)	.001	(.001)
Households (Remittances)	-.091	(.078)	-.089	(.134)	-.098	(.080)
Households (USA)	.108	(.086)	.202**	(.091)	.111	(.085)
Households (Return)	.148	(.256)	.781	(.499)	.145	(.256)
% Female pop.	1.48***	(.256)	1.35***	(.252)	1.47***	(.254)
% Indigenous pop.	-.002	(.014)	-.001	(.014)	-.002	(.014)
% Catholics pop.	.005	(.032)	-.004	(.031)	.005	(.031)
% Employed	.109	(.071)	.097	(.072)	.102	(.072)
% Adults (over 18)	-.071	(.093)	-.054	(.094)	-.070	(.093)
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	.001**	(.001)	.001**	(.001)	-.001**	(.001)
% Educational Att. Gap	.211***	(.060)	-.224***	(.060)	.215***	(.062)
Marginality	-2.02	(1.35)	-1.82	(1.34)	-1.93	(1.42)
Human Development Index	-24.6*	(14.2)	-27.02**	(14.0)	-23.53*	(14.1)
Social Development Index	-20.2**	(9.91)	-18.20*	(9.57)	-20.52**	(10.07)
Crime Frequency	-.001	(.002)	-.001	(.002)	-.001	(.002)
Border States	4.52***	(.961)	4.06***	(.963)	4.35**	(.961)
Remittances X Return			.002***	(.001)		
Remittances X USA			.002	(.008)		
Return X USA			-.078***	(.030)		
Marginality X Remittances					-.067	(.118)
Marginality X USA					.079	(.119)
Marginality X Return					-.108	(.316)
Constant	-13.88		-6.45		-13.25	
R ²	0.0606		0.0690		0.0609	
Observations	2028		2028		2028	

Dependent Variable: Level of competitiveness at the National Level

All F Prob= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

This again suggests that a permanent increase in the level of return migrants could also do much to augment the electoral competitiveness of the country. Before moving on, an important remark is to remind the reader that this level of competitiveness is measured at the *municipio* level. Consequently, despite what might appear as a low percentage it might have quite an impact nationally if this occurred in enough *municipios*. This is particularly true given

the dynamics of the 2006 election, whose numbers are used here. After all, less than half a percentage point decided that contest, leading to the general contested nature of the result, and to the creation of a parallel government that López Obrador baptized as the “legitimate government.”

The other side of this phenomenon is the performance of third parties. As mentioned at the outset, despite the fact that the Mexican party system features three major parties at the national level, the sub-national elections act as a de-facto two party system. This is because given the first past the post electoral rules two frontrunners characterize the majority of local contests with additional parties often attaining a paltry fifteen percent of the vote or less. For instance, in Jalisco, where the PAN (National Action Party) and the PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party) dominate state politics, the PRD (Revolutionary Democratic Party) managed to win a mere five out of 124 municipal contests in the 2003 election, and even in those cases, a majority turned into bipartisan affairs, given that in three of them, the two top vote getters obtained slightly over 75% of the vote on average, and no other party averaged more than 12%.¹⁴ Elsewhere, in Zacatecas, where the PRD and the PRI tend to dominate state politics, the PAN won a measly six out of 57 electoral races, with only half won by more than five percentage points. Hence, it is worth exploring the way in which migrants are contributing to more competitive elections. Have they shifted the vote away from one dominant party and concentrated it on one of the other two major parties? Or have they shifted the vote away from the top two political actors into alternative parties? If the former is true, electoral

¹⁴ Although not an exact description, one could say that sub-national politics are a contest between the PAN and the PRI in the North (with the exception of Zacatecas where it is between the PRD and the PRI) and between the PRD and the PRI in the South (albeit not in Yucatán, where it is between the PAN and the PRI). No state presents a dynamic where the two major forces in the state are the PAN and the PRD, although the Federal District seems to be moving in that direction. If anything, though, the DF is dominated by a single party, the PRD, rather than a two or three way contest.

competitiveness might not prove as efficient in consolidating true accountability. If the latter is true, then migrants are in effect contributing significantly to alter the power underpinnings of the country.

One way to investigate this is to run a statistical model using the aggregated voter percentage obtained by third parties as the dependent variable, which is what table 20 does for us. As has been the case in previous regressions, the original model does not prove significant for any of the independent variables of interest. The interaction models, however, do have some support for our hypotheses. The first one to explore is the migrant figures. Here, the reader might detect that an increase in remittances volume does lead to an increase of the vote share for the third parties, but it is minimal and does not prove significant for very long. This is because at the minimum level of 0.1% increase in the migrant U.S. and return measures, the equivalent impact was a 0.02% in third party vote share, but it dwindles quickly and its maximum is a mere 0.1% third party vote share when the 7.5% combined level for migrant measures is reached.

Elsewhere, consider the households in the US figure. At the relatively modest initial boost combination of remittances and return figures, it would yield a 0.2%, but it would continue escalating, leading to nearly 3% difference for third parties at the local level. Return migrants did not prove significant, but an interesting pattern comes from the next interaction in the model, where marginality is taken into consideration. The first two measures are non-significant, but return migrants provide an enormous boost to third parties chances at the local level where marginality is very high. As the graph shows, in better off places, third parties do not enjoy much added support from migrants, but in more impoverished places, they can reach nearly 1% added to their vote share for each additional % of return migrants.

Table 20. Impact of Migrants on Third Party Power at the Local Level, OLS model

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Households	.001* (.001)	-.001** (.001)	.001** (.001)
Households (Remittances)	.055 (.075)	.250* (.134)	.039 (.079)
Households (USA)	.007 (.079)	.033 (.091)	-.008 (.081)
Households (Return)	-.030 (.244)	-.993* (.599)	.166 (.245)
% Female pop.	-.059 (.283)	-.074** (.284)	-.010** (.281)
% Indigenous household	.002 (.015)	.003 (.015)	.003 (.015)
% Catholics pop.	-.032 (.029)	-.033 (.030)	-.032 (.029)
% Employed	-.044 (.083)	-.035 (.083)	-.016 (.085)
% Adults (over 18)	.257** (.102)	-.247** (.103)	.247** (.102)
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	-.001** (.001)	.001 (.001)	-.001 (.001)
% Educational Att. gap	-.072 (.057)	-.064 (.057)	-.050 (.059)
Marginality	.952 (1.29)	.856 (1.29)	.604 (1.33)
Human Development Index	-3.22 (12.4)	-5.50 (12.5)	-6.09 (12.3)
Social Development Index	-8.10 (9.91)	-6.35 (9.92)	-6.85 (10.0)
Border States	8.32*** (1.26)	8.41*** (1.27)	8.63** (1.26)
Crime	-.005* (.003)	-.005* (.003)	-.005* (.003)
Remittances X Return		.001 (.001)	
Remittances X USA		-.014* (.007)	
Return X USA		.057* (.032)	
Marginality X Remittances			-.028 (.126)
Marginality X USA			-.069 (.126)
Marginality X Return			.785** (.355)
Constant	-15.95	16.65	-15.62
R ²	0.0763	0.0785	0.0791
Observations	1818	1818	1818

Dependent Variable: Vote percentage for third parties local level

All F Prob= 0.0000

Thus, once again, just as they did much to raise the level of participation, and make elections more competitive, return migrants also bettered the chances of third parties, as can be observed from the interaction graphs reported below.

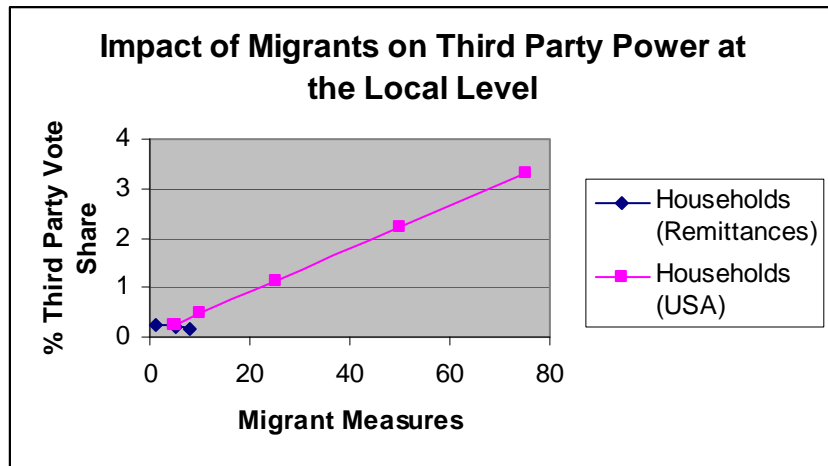


Figure 15. Impact of Migrants on Third Party Share of the Vote at the Local Level (Interaction with Migrant Measures)
All coefficients significant to the .10 level

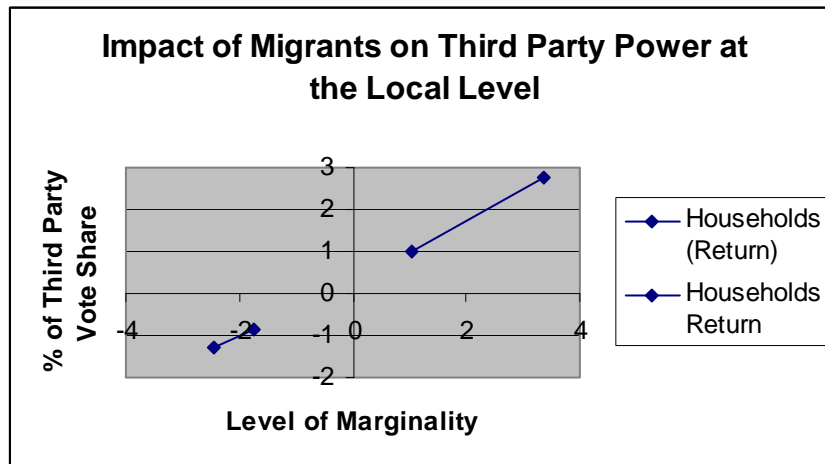


Figure 16. Impact of Migrants on Third Party Share of the Vote at the Local Level (Interaction with Marginality)
All coefficients significant to the .10 level

Hence, this table puts forth evidence where return migrants are making electoral races far more competitive by supporting third parties. Another way to explore this information is to look at the predicted probabilities for this regression. The results are reported below.

Table 21. Predicted Probabilities for Third Party Power at the Local Level

Model	Variable	Mean	1%	5%	10%
2.	All variables at their mean	11.61			
Interaction					
Migrant	% of Households Remittances		10.08	11.15	12.43
Figures	% of Households USA		11.41	11.55	11.74
3.	All variables at their mean	11.61			
Interaction					
Marginality	% of Households Remittances		11.39	11.55	11.75
	% of Households USA		11.67	11.64	11.59
	% of Households Return		11.58	12.23	13.04

From the predicted probabilities we see that return migrants do boost voting percentages significantly, particularly when the interaction with marginality is considered. The question to consider now is whether or not this pattern holds true in national elections? The answer can be observed on the subsequent table, which displays identical statistical models with and without interactions.

Table 22. Impact of Migrants on Third Party Power at the National Level

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
Households	.001	(.001)	-.001	(.001)	-.001	(.001)
Households (Remittances)	-.219***	(.056)	-.297***	(.098)	-.267***	(.061)
Households (USA)	.140***	(.054)	.127**	(.062)	.202***	(.055)
Households (Return)	-.143	(.175)	.232	(.439)	-.139	(.173)
% Female pop.	.416***	(.159)	.466***	(.158)	.376**	(.158)
% Indigenous household	-.047***	(.010)	-.046***	(.010)	-.050***	(.010)
% Catholics pop.	.108***	(.021)	.107***	(.021)	.110***	(.021)
% Employed	.076	(.050)	.076	(.050)	.043	(.050)
% Adults (over 18)	-.281***	(.058)	-.268***	(.059)	-.252***	(.058)
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	-.001	(.001)	.001	(.001)	.001	(.001)
% Educational Att. gap	.081**	(.035)	.077**	(.035)	.037	(.036)
Marginality	-.366	(.808)	-.387	(.807)	.677	(.833)
Human Development Index	10.9	(8.13)	12.4	(8.15)	15.1*	(8.19)
Social Development Index	6.78	(5.85)	4.70	(5.85)	3.67	(5.89)
Border States	.189	(.628)	.227	(.633)	.173	(.634)
Crime	.001	(.001)	.001	(.001)	.001	(.001)
Remittances X Return			-.004	(.005)		
Remittances X USA			-.001**	(.001)		
Return X USA			-.004	(.025)		
Marginality X Remittances					-.059	(.093)
Marginality X USA					-.069	(.073)
Marginality X Return					-.207	(.223)
Constant	-9.88		-12.75*		-6.38	
R ²	0.0823		0.0850		0.0917	
Observations	2028		2028		2028	

Dependent Variable: Vote percentage for third parties

All F Prob= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, *p < .10

In contrast to the previous table, the opening regression exhibits a strong impact on third party power at the national level. Remittances, for example, appear to lower the vote share for third parties, while having members in the U.S. improves their electoral fortunes. The independent variables seem to be working at odds with each other. How can we explain this, particularly given the divergent outcome with the local level? The answer lies in the different political arena. At the national level in the last two or three cycles campaigns have been run

almost exclusively on an economic issue agenda. Thus, in this case, remittances are mitigating some of the economic aspects that would otherwise give traction to some of these *municipios*.

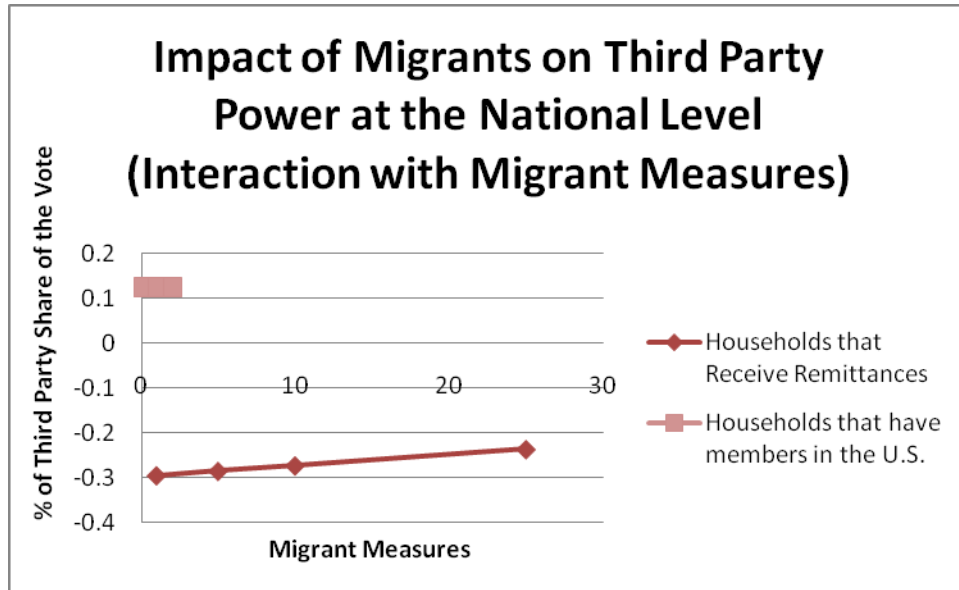


Figure 17. Impact of Migrants on Third Party Share of the Vote at the National Level (Migrant Measures)

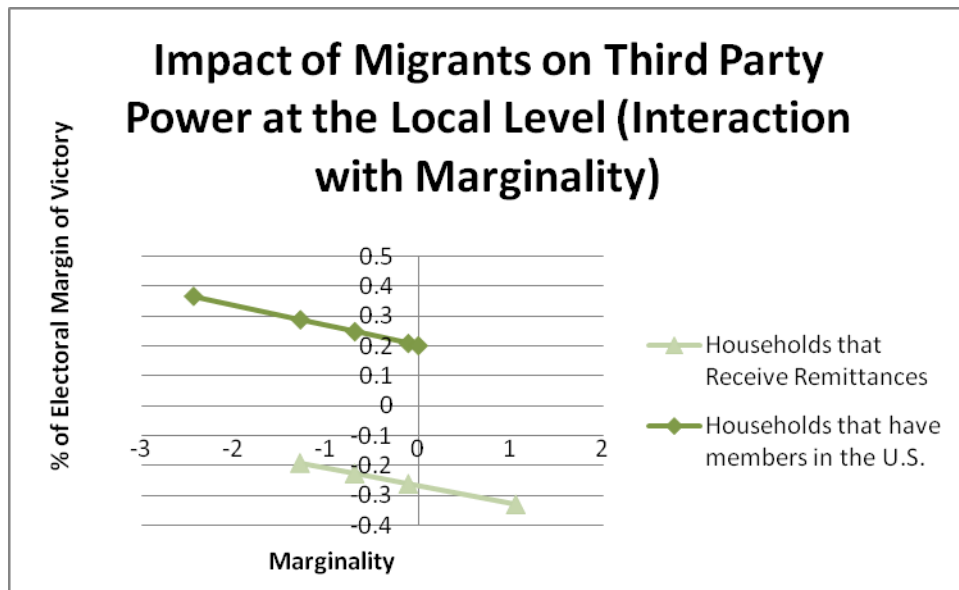


Figure 18. Impact of Migrants on Third Party Share of the Vote at the National Level (Marginality)

All figures significant to the .10 level.

Once one measures a non-economic aspect of migrant influence, namely individuals abroad, the impact on third parties becomes clear, as a positive correlation exists between the two. The interaction models continue to display a contrasting account from that at the local level. The first interaction, for example, that dealing with migrant measures, shows a declining vote share for third parties by the remittances variable, although it tapers off as the migrant influence continues. The Households with individuals abroad does increase third party vote share, but only at a minimal level and it does not prove significant for very long. Elsewhere, using the marginality interaction we find that remittances lower the third party share of the vote as marginality increases, but the US variable has the opposite impact. This is further corroborated in the predicted probabilities reported below.

Table 23. Predicted Probabilities for Third Party Power at the National Level

Model	Variable	Mean	1%	5%	10%
2.	All variables at their mean	23.59			
	% of Households Remittances		25.27	24.11	22.62
3.	All variables at their mean	23.62			
	% of Households Return		23.16	31.51	41.94

A final facet of this inquiry deals with the migrants' impact on the specific fortunes of the three major parties. The last table to be discussed, reports whether migrants mattered in the outcome of the 2006 election. The table demonstrates that they played an important role indeed. The estimations for the individual parties show a clear pattern. Households that received remittances

were more likely to vote in favor of either the PAN or the PRI candidates. The former case, in particular, provides compelling evidence for migrants acting as conduits of political values.

Consider the reasons. As discussed earlier, one could surmise that households receiving remittances can be associated with marginality, lower levels of education, and having more need for government services.

Table 24. Impact of Migrants on Mexican Parties Share of the Vote for the 2006 Election, OLS model

Variable	PAN vote	PRD vote	PRI vote
Households	-.001 (.001)	.001* (.001)	-.000 (.001)
Households (Remittances)	.221** (.063)	-.410*** (.093)	.230*** (.080)
Households (USA)	-.052 (.069)	.046 (.101)	-.043 (.086)
Households (Return)	-.033 (.200)	.524* (.302)	-.405 (.255)
% Female pop.	-1.08** (.183)	1.67** (.276)	-.793*** (.247)
% Indigenous pop.	.010** (.003)	.002 (.004)	-.001 (.016)
% Catholics pop.	-.233** (.025)	-.138** (.031)	.329*** (.029)
% Employed	-.100 (.061)	-.361** (.083)	.417*** (.076)
% Adults (over 18)	.224** (.069)	.301** (.099)	-.466** (.087)
Size of <i>municipio</i> in km ²	-.001** (.001)	-.001** (.001)	.001** (.001)
% Educational Att. gap	.275*** (.044)	.675*** (.067)	.464*** (.058)
Marginality	1.52 (1.06)	.714 (1.45)	-1.56 (1.25)
Human Development Index	2.02 (10.47)	-23.59 (13.92)	30.99** (11.87)
Social Development Index	-20.93** (7.80)	-8.51 (10.28)	36.94*** (8.84)
Crime	.001 (.001)	-.002 (.003)	.001 (.002)
Border States	6.68** (.712)	-13.84** (.992)	6.41*** (.943)
Constant	80.87**	-212.2**	-28.39**
R ²	0.3954	0.2448	0.3180
Observations	2028	2028	2028

Dependent Variable: voting percentage of the three major Mexican parties in the 2006 Presidential Election

All F Prob= 0.0000

Note: ***p < .01, **p < .05, * p < .10

These were precisely the base of the PRI in recent elections, and voters López Obrador—the PRD candidate—most tried to appeal to, with plans to radically expand social programs, denunciations of the rich, and a clever slogan that cried out that “for the good of all, first the poor.” Still, while municipios with high numbers of households receiving remittances proved just as likely to vote for the PRI, they voted overwhelmingly against the PRD and also mattered for the PAN’s vote percentage. In fact, for every municipio with an additional percent of households receiving remittances, López Obrador would lose nearly twice the percentage of votes that the PRI and PAN gained. Certainly, the difference of 0.2% seems rather paltry, and perhaps would have been irrelevant under normal circumstances. As noted earlier, however, the 2006 Mexican presidential election, however, was anything but ordinary. The final IFE tally bestowed the presidency to Felipe Calderón with a mere 0.58% vote advantage nationwide. Thus, it is fair to say that these households very much played a role in deciding the outcome.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The above discussion paints a rather clear picture. The shift in political attitudes that occurs as a result of the migration experience and which migrants subsequently spread either through transnational social networks or when they return home has already had an effect on political outcomes. Migrants’ renewed interest in politics has augmented participation in some cases. This has led to making parties accountable, making it much more complicated to remain in office, even when they enjoy the support of the governor. In addition, the local context shapes the results that occur, and in locations where marginality is not as pronounced, participation is higher. In contrast, in worse off places, the third party share of the vote improves. In this way,

migrants have begun to further democratize the country turning elections more competitive, albeit not always through alternative parties. While this conclusion might certainly be the result of the specific elections examined here, the large body of evidence suggests that migrants are indeed contributing to the democratization of Mexico, which in turn has occurred due to the socialization experienced as a result of migration.

4.0 EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF MIGRANTS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The previous chapters have shown the myriad of ways in which migrants are having an impact on the political behavior of their countries of origin. As promising as these results might be, the statistical results are not free of criticism. The first problem comes from data limitations. For one, the two dependent variables of interest in the questionnaire used in chapter three were a bit too rigid and as such could not fully capture the dynamic I was interested in, making for what could be patchy theoretical links. Similarly, despite the superior data used in chapter four, the numbers only exist for a limited time, and thus could be interpreted as an aberration rather than a trend. The second problem is that the use of statistics can only partially illustrate the underlying dynamics, and thus, an important part of the story can be missed. To address these weaknesses in the dissertation, I carried out field work in Mexico. This field work corroborated the statistical results and further elucidated the dynamics through which democratic value transference occurs. This chapter will detail the ways in which this work was completed, and present its findings.

The field work consisted of interviews with politicians, diverse community leaders such as priests and teachers, return migrants, and business owners in three Mexican states with varying degrees of migrant population. The work lasted five weeks in the summer of 2007, with an average of three days at each site. The states in question were Jalisco, Puebla and Zacatecas. These were selected for a number of reasons. First, all had a long tradition of migratory flows, thus allowing for comparison overtime, and for circular migrants who had gone to the United

States to come back. Second, immigration studies dealing with all three states already existed allowing for additional secondary sources (Garcia Zamora 2003, Rivera Sánchez 2004). Even more importantly, a significant distinction exists between the latter two states that allows for some theory testing. While Zacatecas enjoys a high rate of migrant remittances, a high level of transnational migrant organization, and a high level of migrants per capita that encompasses almost the entire state, Puebla does not.³ Rather, Puebla has regions within it that exhibit these characteristics, but has a more diversified economy and Mexicans living abroad have yet to participate in state politics as much as their counterparts in Zacatecas. In other words, Zacatecas, both economically and politically, is more dependant on Mexican immigrants than Puebla is. Jalisco is somewhere in between the two, having more municipios than Puebla with high concentrations of individuals abroad, but still less than Zacatecas and not enjoying nearly the level of transnational migrant organization that Zacatecas enjoys. Finally, when I carried out the field work these states happened to be governed by all three major parties in Mexico. Specifically, Jalisco had a PANista (National Action Party) governor, Zacatecas one from the PRD (Democratic Revolution Party) and Puebla retained its PRI (Revolutionary Institutional Party) allegiance; therefore precluding a faulty conclusion having more to do with local politics than with any international dynamics. Additional information is reported for all three states below on table 25.

³ Zacatecas has been the state where returning migrants have been the most active, both in getting some concessions from the state and in fielding candidates who have been Mexican immigrants themselves.

Table 25. Descriptive Measures for the States Where Field Work was Carried Out

	Puebla	Jalisco	Zacatecas
Area	33,902 Km2	79,082 Km2	73,252 Km2
Population (2005)	5,383,133	6,152,113	1,367, 692
Human Development Index	Medium (25 th)	High (13 th)	Medium (26 th)
Largest City	Puebla (1,485,941)	Guadalajara (1,579,174)	Zacatecas (122,889)
% Households (Remittances)	3.28%	7.70%	13.03%
% Households (USA)	4.02%	6.53%	12.18%
% Households (Return)	0.66%	1.68%	2.55%
Governor	PRI	PAN	PRD

To be able to fully tease out the impact of the two theoretical strands in which I was interested—the number of migrants and level of remittances—it was necessary to also find some variation within the states. Thus, I created a simple two by two table that tried to capture the interaction between these two strands along with another political variable: the dominance or not of the PRI. I chose this last variable given the long history of domination of this party in Mexican politics, and I suspected that in heavily PRIista municipios there might be an independent effect that might complicate the potential influence from abroad. Thus, the actual places I visited defined by the two by two table, look like this

Zacatecas (state governed by the PRD)

PRI

		Low	High
Migrants Remittances	Low	Pánuco	General E. Estrada
	High	Tlaltenango de Sánchez	Ojocaliente

Puebla (state governed by the PRI)

PRI

		Low	High
Migrants Remittances	Low	Domingo Arenas	Chiautla de Tapia
	High	San Diego La Mesa Tochimiltzingo	Atzala

Jalisco (state governed by the PAN)

PRI

		Low	High
Migrants Remittances	Low	Acatic	San Juan de los Lagos
	High	Tepatitlan	Valle de Guadalupe

In order for the reader to get a better sense of the individual characteristics of the place, a table is provided with additional descriptive aspects of each of the places visited.

Table 26. Important Descriptors of the *Municipios* Visited

	<i>% Households Remittances</i>	<i>%Households USA</i>	<i>% Households Return</i>	<i>Marginality</i>
<i>Zacatecas</i>				
Pánuco	4.3	5.3	0.4	Medium
General Estrada	10.8	9.9	2.0	Low
Tlaltenango de Sánchez	15.9	15.2	4.3	Low
Ojocaliente	12.6	12.1	3.6	Medium
Momax	11.9	12.0	2.9	Medium
<i>Puebla</i>				
Domingo Arenas	1.6	4.8	0	Medium
Chiautla de Tapia	22.8	9.32	2.9	Medium
San Diego La Mesa	11.8	20.6	2.9	High
Tochimiltzingo				
Atzala	20.5	19.1	3.8	High
Coatzingo	17.9	5.9	2.0	High
<i>Jalisco</i>				
Acatic	13.2	15.2	6.5	Low
San Juan de los Lagos	9.5	9.8	2.5	Low
Tepatitlán	7.6	10.0	3.0	Very Low
Valle de Guadalupe	10.2	13.4	4.5	Low

Finally, for the reader who might be unfamiliar with the area, a map is provided below.

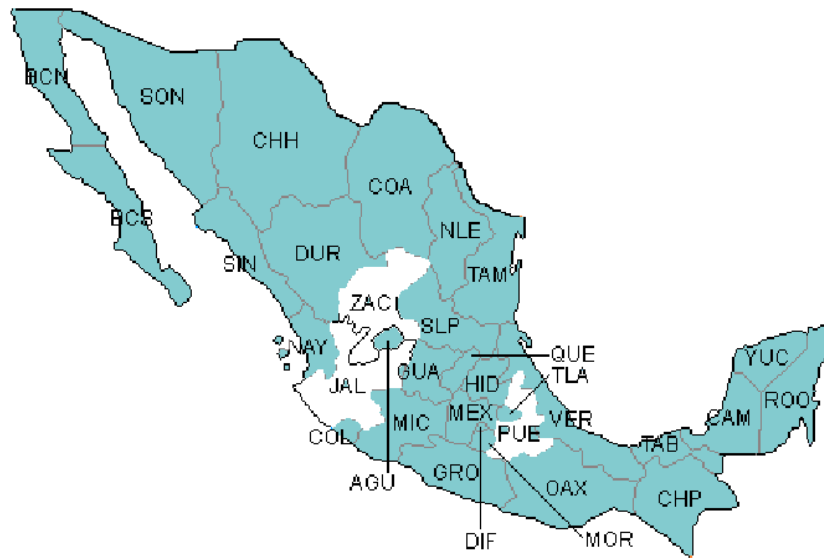


Figure 19. Map of the Mexican States Where Field Work was Carried Out

The clear areas are the ones visited, each with their respective abbreviations: Jalisco (JAL), Zacatecas (ZAC), and Puebla (PUE). In addition, within each state, the shaded areas are the actual municipios visited.

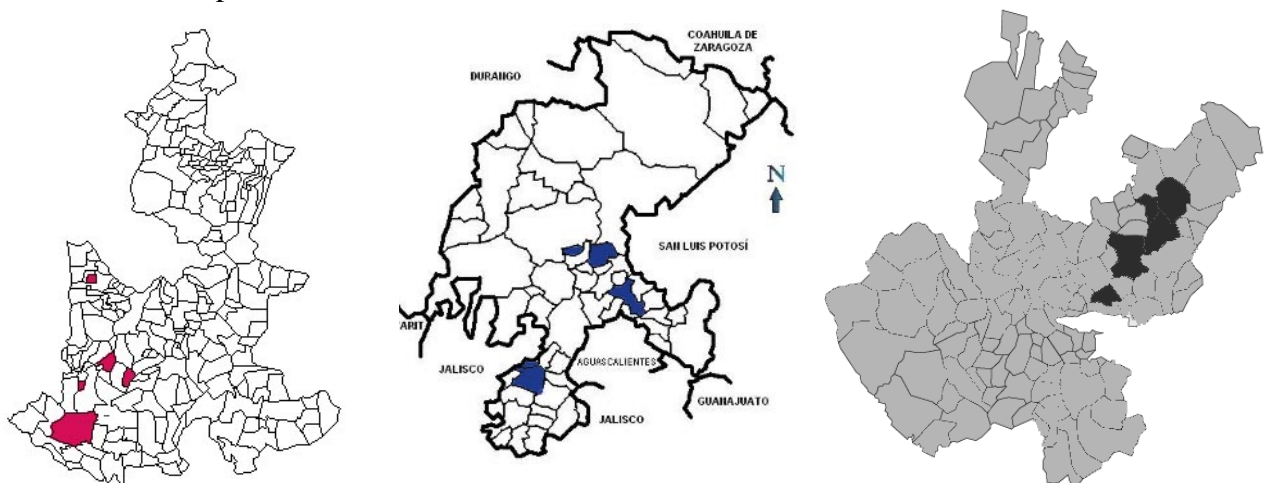


Figure 20. Municipios in Which Field Work was Carried Out, Summer 2007

At each location, I tried to interview as many people as possible, although I particularly emphasized county executives (*presidentes municipales*), given both their sense of the political pulse of the area, and their first hand knowledge of the level of political organization of migrants. I used a general questionnaire at each site, albeit with additional questions depending on the place or the flow of the interview.⁴ In particular, I wanted to know if individuals perceived changes in political attitudes of those that had gone and come back, but also tried to get a sense of the politics of the sites to see the impact that migrants had in the region. The major findings follow.

4.1 CHANGE IN POLITICAL ATTITUDES

In general, I found evidence of political attitude change across the states starting in Puebla. Located in the central part of the country, with easy access to Mexico City, the pattern of migration from Puebla is a relatively recent development, particularly compared to the other two states in my sample, Jalisco and Zacatecas. This leads to a slightly different migrant profile for Puebla. Overall, *poblanos* tend to be younger, have spent less time abroad, and have lived abroad in locations with fewer Mexicans, but more established latin migrants, namely New York, New Jersey and other places in the East Coast. Moreover, unlike Jalisco and Zacatecas with a broad pattern of immigration that includes cities and rural areas, *poblano* migrants tend to come

⁴ See Appendix for the full questionnaire.

from the dry areas of the South and the isolated mountain towns in the North. All sites I visited are located in the Southern part.

In Chiautla de Tapia, for example, one of the men in the city council explained:

“Well, yes. One immediately realizes that people come back with other ideas, questions of hygiene, of sexual protection, for example. Political concerns, even.” (Chiautla de Tapia, Sindico, Interview May 2007).

Elsewhere, in Coatzingo, one of the local teachers suggested a more profound impact of migrants, as a result of political attitude change:

“Well, yes. I have definitely noticed differences [since migrants started leaving and coming back]. For example, in matters of politics, now even women participate, before, when?” (Teacher, Coatzingo, Interview May 2007).

This was also perceived by the return migrants themselves, both young and old, which often made the connection between their time in the U.S. and their subsequent political attitudes quite explicit. For example, in San Diego La Mesa, the *presidente municipal*, a man in his forties, considered the impact in his own life:

“I, frankly, changed a lot. One sees how things are over there [in the U.S.], that everything is well-controlled, that they respect the law, that people live well. It gave me the idea that I too could put a little bit of that in Mexico.” (*Presidente Municipal*, Interview May 2007).

In a different migrant community, another *presidente municipal*—this one in his thirties—echoed the same sentiment when he quipped:

“Well, yes. I know that because of the boss I had (in the US) now I am very responsible. I know that one has the obligation to be punctual and that one has to work hard.” (Atzala, Puebla. *Presidente Municipal*. Interview May 2007).

Meanwhile, younger people, particularly women, noticed differences in attitudes about women's rights and the role of women in general.

“People are so different here. They think that just because someone is a woman, one can't do certain things.” (Student who came back from the U.S., Interview May 2007).

Other examples include a hotel owner in Chiautla de Tapia, Puebla, and a taxi driver in Atlixco, Puebla, who told me that they had become more awakened to politics because they saw just how different things were [in the US]. Specifically, they referred to their jobs, how orderly they were, how institutionalized everything was, how responsibility was not taken lightly, the owner did not show up late, and one could easily lose their job if they did not do what was expected of them. This was in contrast to their perception that in Mexico, the responsibility authorities feel to the people is completely lacking.

Certainly, time and place seems to be a factor. Those migrating to places with fewer migrants for longer periods of time seem to be more likely to alter their political attitudes. For example, Atzala's migrants tend to opt for California destinations for shorter periods of time than their counterparts in Chiautla de Tapia. Thus, one was able to see subtle differences in their political attitudes. For example, despite the fact that Atzala is located in a more prosperous economic zone, with easier access to the state capital, people were less likely to be hopeful about political solutions to their economic problems. On the other hand, those in Chiautla seemed to believe that economic support from their countrymen empowered them to solve their collective problems such as the constant threat of drought in the area. Some former migrants who I spoke to in San Diego de la Mesa made this point more overtly, when asked if their trip to the U.S. had changed their perception.

“No, we came back the same. But, well, neither did we last very long. Those that come back now...yes they do. Those, last years, and look at how they come back. They even run for *presidente municipal*.” (Interview with former migrants, May 2007).

Jalisco and Zacatecas, unlike Puebla, have no particular concentration of sending communities. Rather, migrants come from all corners of the region, and while in decades past the traditional destination had been the Southwest, now both states boast migrants in the new migrant destinations in the United States including the Midwest and the South. Furthermore, unlike Puebla, migrants from both of these states are more diverse in terms of age and social class. In spite of these differences, a similar pattern of attitude change to that of Puebla surfaced. For instance, in Tlaltenango, Zacatecas, the *presidente municipal* assured me that:

“Life in the United States is like a school. Over there, one learns how things should be, how the government can really be. Everything clean and in order.” (Interview Presidente Municipal, Tlaltenango, June 2007).

More to the point, in the same town, I met a man, currently running for president for a tiny political party (Alternativa), who told me that he had lived in the US for 10 years. He said that living in the US gave him a sense of just how immature the political system in Mexico was. The problem, as he saw it, was that unlike the US, the government in Mexico can do just fine and actually prosper the more unresponsive it is to the majority of the population. So when he came back, he decided to do something about it, not with mere bandages, but actually joining with people who had a long term vision. He wanted to join a political party that was not top-down, but bottom up like Alternativa—a tiny political party with about 6% of the presidential vote in the past 2006 election. He also stressed that in becoming the presidente of Alternativa, he wanted to contribute from his experience in the US, specifically by promising only viable things. In particular, he talked about improving accountability with simple measures:

“Look, here’s a simple thing. How about actually being at work at a set schedule rather than showing up whenever they feel like it in the morning?” (Political candidate of Alternativa, Tlaltenango, Interview, May 2007).

Party or location did not seem to matter much. Individuals from all walks of life told me again and again their perception of how those who come back have changed, which in general they find positive. Another example comes from the county executive’s secretary in Ojocaliente, Zacatecas who expressed how ideas propagate within the community:

“Well, of course, people come back politically changed. And this spreads within the families [of those with connections in the US]. Here, I can tell you that people have supported our vision, because people come back more prepared.” (Ojocaliente, Zacatecas, Secretary of the *Presidente Municipal*, interview May 2007).

More broadly speaking, both states showed clear migrant influence in their physical appearance. Southwestern type architecture dotted the migrant regions that I visited in both Zacatecas and Jalisco, and more tellingly, places like Tepatitlán and Tlaltenango had actually incorporated American style stop signs, along with the associated traffic rules. While this latter point might not seem like much evidence of migrant influence, it actually is. Stop signs are not common anywhere in central Mexico, particularly in rural areas, and yet, this had become then norm in these places. A *presidente municipal* underlined this connection:

“People certainly change [in the United States], even in the way they want to see their houses. Have you not seen them? They come back and want to have a nice house with a garden [like in the U.S.]. But of course, well taken care of...Would you believe that even palm trees [like in California] are fashionable now? I have one in my house.” (Interview, Secretary to the *Presidente Municipal*, Tepatitlán, June 2007).

4.2 MIGRANTS, POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

More than attitude change, the field work suggested further evidence for the findings in chapter three and four, namely that attitude change leads to increased participation. In communities with high migrant population, the consensus seemed to be that individuals participated more in the political and social life of their places of origin, at least partly as a result of their migration experience. For example, in Zacatecas, the director of a local middle school explained:

“People really participate here. They are always very active in the decision-making. I can also tell you that the migrants have participated economically and have contributed for things here at the school. For example, they were the ones that got us a bus [for the school].” (Director of a Middle School, General Estrada, Interview, May 2007).

Elsewhere, another school director echoed the sentiment and attributed directly to the migration experience. As he put it:

“To go [to the United States] gives people more trust in themselves. A person that has the same little education than one that remains here, perhaps will not be able to communicate themselves as well in Spanish, but they are not embarrassed, they come and they want to know everything. They want to be active in the school.” (Ojocaliente, Zacatecas, High School Director, Interview June 2007).

More than that, he emphasized its benefit, particularly in regards to new policies and attributed a specific political outcome to the presence of migrants in the town. He elaborated that the new environmental policies of the PRD were extremely difficult to implement in the school because of the idiosyncrasies and cultural practices of the locals, but:

“The ones that come [from the U.S.]. Those did come and support [our efforts], those did participate. You will not find a greener school anywhere in the region.” (Ojocaliente, Zacatecas, Interview, June 2007).

This extended to political participation, and this point surfaced over and over again in various locations in different guises. In General Estrada, Zacatecas, for instance, the *presidente municipal* emphasized that in his town:

“Certainly, people participate [more than in previous years]. That’s become people return with a different vision. They bring new ideas and it’s also so we can [succeed], because they love their town [that is why they participate].” (General Estrada, Zacatecas, Interview, June 2007).

I also found that in general, local authorities seem to be quite concerned about the opinion of the individuals abroad. That is, migrants seem to act as a political counterweight and bring at least some accountability. In Chiautla de Tapia, for example, the PRIista *presidente municipal* elected in 2006 tried to run his administration with a dictatorial manner and with little transparency. As a result, a group of locals took over the presidency for three months until the *presidente* resigned, all the while apparently being supported and cheered on from abroad. On the subject, the new authorities opined:

“One needs not announce anything. The ones living here, tell the ones living over there. That way, they know we’re working and there’s no problem.” (Sindico, Chiautla de Tapia, Interview May 2007).

Concern with migrant’s opinions even makes it to political rallies. In Tlaltenango, I witnessed a local political rally for the PRD—the current party in power. The candidate, a young protégé of the current administration, made his position clear:

“We want the paisanos that come back to find a Tlaltenango they can be proud of. We want it to be a place they want to come back to, and we are going to work with them to make it happen.” (PRD rally, Tlaltenango, June 2007).

Perhaps one of the reasons that explains this is the fact that migrants seem to be less partisan than those who never left. That is, they have certain expectations about the role of

government and they do not necessarily associate it with a particular party. As an example, one can cite the politics of General Estrada in Zacatecas. The *municipio* like much of the state had voted the PRD into power, but the *presidente* seemed to care more about higher office rather than the needs of the town, so in the next election they turned to a migrant, who had a reputation of being honest. As it was explained to me by a former migrant, now a business owner:

“We do not care about the party. Independently of political parties, we want to see results. People care about who comes to work, who has the door of the presidency open to shady deals. It is not like before, that we just let things happen.” (General Estrada, Interview, May 2007).

The theoretical framework I originally designed also included a number of negative cases. That is, I also visited additional sites similar in terms of vicinity and population, but with a negligible rate of migration. The aim was to explore the extent to which political trends were associated with migrants, rather than with the country as a whole. In general, the interviews supported the intuition of the project, as no *municipio* showed similar levels of participation, or interest in politics, regardless of party or alternance in power at the local level. Indeed, locals oftentimes did not find voting a useful tool in the improving of their lives. For instance, in Domingo Arenas in Puebla, the local *presidente municipal* lamented that participation had actually dropped in recent times:

“Well, people might participate, but not like they used to...Particularly in matters of community work, when we need economic or political support from people, they do not participate. They think that things will get done even if they do not do anything.” (Domingo Arenas, *Presidente Municipal*, Interview May 2007).

Similarly, individuals did not seem to trust the government much or see the point of participating in the political matters of the town. A business owner put it in rather stark terms:

“People don’t see about parties. What for? They are all the same. If people participate at all in local matters is because they actually know someone, rather than because they think they are capable or their lives will change much.” (Domingo Arenas, business owner, Interview May 2007).

The issue of participation did not seem to be associated with a particular party. While Acatic, a town in Jalisco ruled by the PRI, the participation seemed to be average according to many of the individuals who I talked to, Pánuco, Zacatecas, headed by the PRD, the level of participation was dismal. The *presidente municipal* made this explicit, when he confided his frustration with the local lack of interest in politics:

“Look, let me just tell you. You are probably well-aware of the committees the state government is encouraging for social participation. Those that try to make the government more accountable, increase transparency, right? Well, in Pánuco, we use five people to form a committee, and oftentimes, we can barely get three, not even enough to head a committee, let alone one to make a real connection with people.” (Pánuco, Zacatecas, *Presidente Municipal*, Interview June 2007).

Taken together, these interviews strongly suggest that people change as a result of the migration experience, which in turn leads to added participation, and at least some added accountability.

4.3 MIGRANTS AND LIMITS OF GRASSROOTS CHANGE

Given this situation, where political actors concur that individuals come back with novel political ideas and are prompt to engage the local political scene, why does Mexico seem to be so slow transform itself, even at the municipal level? I gathered a number of clues. The first problem is conflict with those who remain. While, in general, they have admiration and respect for those

who return, towns are not always ready to embrace whatever new ideas migrants might bring. A member of the city council in Chiautla de Tapia, alluded to this when he explicated the reason why he had not immediately tried to run for office, or even tried to carry out some of the ideas he had for the town:

“One comes back with lots of ideas, lots of good ideas. But then, things are not so easy. People have to first recognize one. I first had to have people [come to terms] with me [before I could do anything].” (Chiautla de Tapia, Puebla, *Regidor*, Interview May 2007).

Elsewhere, a priest in Coatzingo, Puebla elaborated on this issue. As he put it, those left behind might have a lot of deference for migrants, but this also has a component of resentment and envy. Added to this the fact that people generally have little education leads to community reticence to incorporate new political strategies or ideas. A taxi driver from San Juan de los Lagos echoed this when he noted that individuals might come back with new ideas, often good ones, but sometimes, they were “too liberal, and we don’t want those here.” (San Juan de los Lagos, Interview June 2007). More tellingly, Middle school students in San Diego la Mesa—half of which fully intended to leave the town for the United States as soon as they were capable—told me that the reason why life was not improving in their town was because there were locals who blocked the progress migrants tried to bring. According to them, “San Diego would be better if everyone would go to the United States and come back.” (San Diego la Mesa, Puebla, Interview May 2007). Certainly, this conflict results in frustration for those intending to better their *municipios* of origin, which either leads to disengaging from political leadership, or leave altogether from the area. The secretary to a local state representative in Puebla, elaborated:

“The problem is that as soon as they see how difficult it is to change things, they simply leave. You know what they do? They move to Atlixco.⁵ Overthere, they find more likeminded

⁵ Atlixco is a prosperous city. It is the second largest urban area in the state of Puebla, with relatively easy access to the capital of the state and Mexico City.

people. Or at the very least, they don't have to be worried about the lack of government services." (Izucar de Matamoros, Puebla. Secretary of a State Representative. Interview, May 2007).

The second problem has to do with government capabilities. As a *sindico* (councilman) in Puebla articulated:

"Well, yes, the *paisanos* come back, and they do bring other ideas, right. They want to fix this and that. But sometimes this just can't be done. Here, there are big needs and few resources." (Chiautla de Tapia, Puebla, *Sindico*, interview May 2007).

Another problem is institutional. A very young *presidente municipal* in Jalisco put it in very clear terms:

"Well, yes, of course, people come back and come with all kinds of ideas. I'll give you two examples. As soon as they get here, they want to change our trash services and our traffic laws. They say 'overthere is like this. Here, it should be like that too.' And yes, it is not that I do not agree, but it's just that we do not have the means to put that into practice. The *municipio* here, even if the Constitution says it, it's not very autonomous. We do not have the resources to simply add resources or expand the landfills." (Valle de Guadalupe, Jalisco, *Presidente Municipal*, interview June 2007)

Just as importantly, it appears that the places where immigrants hold the potential to have the most impact, that is, in small towns around the country, are also the places where they will face the most obstacles to do something with their new ideas, namely marginalization, lack of overall education, and lack of institutional power at the local level.

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed the findings of the field work in Mexico in the summer of 2007. At the heart of the project were two general lines of inquiry established in my theoretical framework,

and for which I had already found statistical evidence. The first line was whether or not individuals altered their political attitudes. The second line was to what extent this transformation had an impact on political outcomes. I hypothesized that one of the consequences would be a higher level of participation, and which in turn, the statistics suggested would also lead to more political accountability. Both of these strands received support from the field.

First, individuals from all walks of life, regardless of the party in office, specific economic make up of the region, or isolation from the capital city, informed me again and again that the attitudes of migrants do change. The interviews fleshed out further how this process happens, as return migrants explicated that their experience abroad led them at first to be familiar with a different way of life, and then to question things at home. Second, while a bottom-up democratization spearheaded by migrants has been surfacing in Mexico, institutional and local constraints have slowed the potential to transform the country. That is, the same dynamics that made people leave in the first place, are the same ones that prevent people from radically converting their local communities.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The transnational literature has suggested a link between immigration and democratization, a phenomenon that some scholars have termed *social remittances*. And yet, it has been slow to scrutinize this relationship empirically, mostly because of lack of data and difficulties in measuring its potential impact. This dissertation looked in detail at this question through an approach from the political behavior literature. The argument posited at the outset suggested that the immigration experience itself leads to a transformation in political attitudes, which in turn get transferred to the countries of origin through social networks and actual political participation when immigrants return home. The former occurred through a number of interrelated phenomena, namely access to new ideas about the host country, as well as one's own, the questioning of identity, and novel interactions between individuals and a nation state through the form of laws, regulations and general attitudes about government functions. While a similar trend might have transpired in previous immigrant waves, the second part of the argument is what has made this phenomenon so much more relevant in the present day. As discussed at the outset, technological advances in transportation and communications have made the transference of ideas possible in enough numbers to make a difference in the countries of origin. These theoretical claims were tested empirically at both the individual and the aggregate level through quantitative and qualitative methods.

The second chapter investigated this using survey data from the Mexican Migrant Survey in addition to the Latin American Public Opinion Project. The two surveys were used in an effort to connect the dots at both ends of the migration chain, and to address as much as possible the potential problem of self-selection bias. The first survey, carried out entirely in the Southwest, permitted some evidence showing that the immigration experience had a definite effect on attitudes toward Mexican institutions. To wit, the statistical models demonstrated that the longer one stayed in the United States, the more likely it was that one would find fault with the performing of Mexican institutions, and less likely one would feel connection to the PRI. The former also held true for those sending money to Mexico. In this way, the Mexican Migrant Survey corroborated the first part of the theoretical argument, that migrants once in the United States altered their attitudes about their country of origin.

The second survey, carried out in seven countries including Mexico, Colombia and several in Central America, allowed us to test at the other end of the migration chain. Mainly, the point was to establish whether or not attitudes were actually being transferred. Despite some weaknesses having to do with the nature of the questions, the second survey did bear out a number of important findings. The first important finding surfaced in the case of those with contact with migrants abroad, as these individuals were more likely to participate and have stronger democratic attitudes. That is, those who received remittances were not only more likely to attend political rallies, work for political parties and vote, but also had more tolerance for the rights of those they disagreed with politically, including their rights to protest, run for office and vote. The second significant result emerged with those that had actually lived in the United States and had returned. This sample was small and did not fully capture the migrant experience. Still, the data suggested that those who had lived abroad were more likely to feel politically

efficient, and had far less tolerance of corrupt actions in the government than those who had never left.

The third chapter aimed to examine this connection at the aggregate level. In particular, the question was whether having an effect at the individual level made a difference for political outcomes in the country of origin. To do this, the chapter used data taken from the Mexican census that had figures for the percentage of households with members who had returned and for those which still had individuals abroad for all of the *municipios* in the country. This coupled with electoral returns from a number of local and national elections allowed for a wide number of dependent variables to be tested. This examination concentrated on the demand side of the political equation. That is, the chapter considered whether or not *municipios* with a higher percentage of migrants had higher rates of participation at both the local and national levels, whether or not the rate of incumbency was lower, whether or not the rate of competitiveness was higher, and whether third parties received a higher percentage of the vote. All of these were based on electoral results for elections that happened *after* 2000, when the migrant figures were collected.

The results were compelling. On participation, the chapter showed that those *municipios* with a larger number of migrants, both receiving remittances and those that have returned, saw the participation level increase, particularly as marginality increased. This model held for both the local and national deputy races with different permutations. The pattern showed more clearly in the latter, suggesting that once abroad individuals follow a similar outline than those of more advanced countries, where national elections hold more interest than local races. This increased level of participation makes it harder for incumbent parties to remain in office, allows for more competitive races, and even boosts the vote totals of third parties. In the models exploring the

likelihood of incumbent parties retaining office, the chapter found that *municipios* with a high level of remittances were more likely to retain an incumbent, while the *municipios* with a high level of *return* migrants, were more likely to vote them out. In other words, the impact of new political attitudes is not felt at the local level, until a significant amount of return migrants exists. This is again because while abroad, interest in participation is higher in the national races, although clearly it shifts once they have returned home. More elaborate models were run on the point of competitiveness. The results suggested that *municipios* with higher level of migrants abroad and with some consideration of the local context displayed more competitive elections, and further investigation looking at third party behavior suggested this occurred through individuals coalescing around a single opposition party, not around third parties. In addition, this took place because *municipios* where marginality did not loom as large a challenge.

Finally, the models used in this chapter exhibited the influence that migrants had on the outcome of the 2006 presidential election. Specifically, the models showed that *municipios* that received remittances were more likely to vote for the PRI or the PAN, and to actively vote *against* the PRD. While the former result might not seem surprising to an observer of Mexican politics, given that the PRI's once dominant base has shrunk to poverty stricken areas, both results are compelling for two reasons. First, these were the very voters the PRD standard bearer tried to appeal to with his emphasis on poverty reduction and his populist faction. Second, the PAN has traditionally done terribly among poorer voters, and yet, *municipios* with contacts abroad were more likely to vote for the party. This connects to the influence we outlined in chapter three, where we found that the longer individuals have been in the U.S., the closer they feel to the PAN, regardless of income, education or gender. In other words, *municipios* with high migrant contact that one would have expected to vote for López Obrador, opted not to,

either with a safer bet, or with a complete change, a particularly important finding given the tiny margin by which the 2006 election was decided.

The fourth chapter considered how this actually played out in the ground. I traveled to twelve *municipios* in Mexico using various criteria. First, I selected three states ranging from high to low migrants, which happened to be governed by the three major parties in the country. That is, I opted to carry out field work in Zacatecas (PRD), Jalisco (PAN) and Puebla (PRI). In addition, within each of the states, I looked for further variation, by creating a two by two matrix that combined places with low and high migrants along an important political variable, namely the strength the PRI had achieved in the latest election. I chose this last variable given the long history of domination of this party in Mexican politics, and also because I suspected that in heavily *priista municipios*, there might be an independent effect that might complicate the potential influence from abroad. Lastly, I also included two supplementary types of *municipios*. Those with high migrants that enjoyed low remittances, and those with low migrants that benefited from a high remittance rate.

The field work consisted of interviews with politicians, diverse community leaders such as priests and teachers, return migrants, and business owners in three Mexican states with varying degrees of migrant population, all in Spanish. In doing so I discovered that migrants indeed play a role as conduits of values. Over and over, in various setting and contrasting circumstances, individuals echoed my suspicions. Migrants bring not only new ideas, but bring a fresh perspective and provide at least some accountability to local authorities. Still, powerful obstacles remain to a bottom-up change in Mexico, where despite the presence of a new social actor, change comes at a very slow pace. In fact, the very factors that led individuals to opt for opportunities abroad are the ones constraining the potential of migrants to transform the

communities. That is, chronic poverty, weak institutions, lack of education, and economic stagnation conspire to prevent deep reformation, and yet, that is happening at all, is itself a fascinating phenomenon.

To conclude, this work has shown evidence for a process of political attitude transference to the countries of origin. It proved attitude change among migrants in the United States, and attitude transference to the countries of origin at the individual and aggregate level, using both quantitative and qualitative level. This is some of the first concrete evidence to corroborate the theoretical idea of social remittances, and it opens up a number of questions worth pursuing. Further research is needed to examine statistically whether migrants have an impact on political outcomes in other countries in Latin America, or whether this is something unique to the Mexican case. Another potential fruitful avenue of investigation is to trace in more detail how this occurs, and scrutinize both ends of the migration chain. Are certain migrants more influential in attitude transference than others? Does regime change matter? What role does the host country play? Are certain places in the country of origin more responsive to migrant influence? Why? Finally, this contributes to the ongoing public debate on immigration. According to my dissertation, migrants are having an impact not only on the host country, but also on the countries of origin, a democratizing one that could have long term consequences.

APPENDIX A

VARIABLES USED FROM THE DIFFERENT SURVEYS (PEW HISPANIC SURVEY AND LAPOP) FOR CHAPTER 2

Variables used from the Pew Hispanic Center Survey of Mexicans Living in the U.S.

Opinion of Mexican Institutions

In general terms, what is your general opinion of the way Mexican Institutions function? Would you say that they are 5 very good, 4 good, 3 fair, 2 bad, 1 very bad?

Closeness to Mexican Political Parties

In Mexican politics, which of the following parties, do you feel closest to? 1 PRI 2 PAN 3 PRD 7 None of the three.

Time Lived in the U.S.

0 to 99 (0 being less than a year)

US Citizenship

Yes 1

No 0

Education

What is the last grade in school that you completed?

1 1 to 8 or no school

2 High School incomplete

3 High School grad

4 GED

5 Business or Vocational School

6 Some College, no 4 year degree

7 College Graduate

Household income (after taxes)

1 Less than \$5000

2 5,000 but less than 10,000

3 10,000 but less than 15,000

Female

0 Man

1 Woman

Phone Frequency

1 Almost never

2 Less than once a month

3 Once or twice a month

4 Once a week

5 More than once a week

8 Post Graduate Training
9 Refused

Variables used from the Latin American Public Opinion Project.

Independent variables of interest

Do you receive remittances?

Yes 1
No 0

Have you lived in the US in the last three years?

Yes 1
No 0

Do you have intention of Leaving the country in the next three years?

Yes 1
No 0

Additive Index for Independent Variables

Political Participation

Have you ever asked the President for some aid with a problem? (1-3)

Have you ever asked a federal deputy for some aid with a problem? (1-3)

Have you ever asked a local authority for some aid with a problem? (1-3)

Have you ever protested in a public demonstration? Have you done it sometimes, rarely or never? (1-3)

Have you gone to a political assembly called by the mayor in the last year?

Have you presented a petition with the local municipio or authority in the past year?

Did you vote in the past national election? (0-1)

Did you work for a party or candidate?

Institutional Trust

To what extent do you believe your country's tribunals guarantee a just trial? (1-7)

To what extent do you have respect for your country's institutions? (1-7)

To what extent do you believe the basic rights of your country's citizens are protected by your country's political system? (1-7)

To what extent are you proud to live under your country's political system? (1-7)

To what extent do you believe your country's political system should be supported? (1-7)

To what extent do you trust the judicial system? (1-7)

To what extent do you trust the elections? (1-7)

To what extent do you trust Congress? (1-7)

To what extent do you trust the National Government? (1-7)

To what extent do you trust the Police? (1-7)

To what extent do you trust political parties? (1-7)

To what extent do you trust the Supreme Court (1-7)

To what extent do you trust your local authority? (1-7)

Horizontal Trust

Speaking of people living around here. Would you say that people are: Not trustworthy at all? A bit trustworthy? Somewhat trustworthy? Very trustworthy?

Do you believe people only care about themselves or that they try to help other people most of the time? (0-1)

Do you believe that if people had the opportunity, would take advantage of you? Or that they would not take advantage of you? (0-1)

Informed

How often do you...listen to news on the radio? (1-4)

Watch news on TV? (1-4)

Read newspapers? (1-4)

Read news on the internet? (1-4)

Community Participation (Social Connectedness)

Have you donated money or materials in the last year to solve a problem in your community? (0-1)

Have you donated your own work? (0-1)

Have you assisted to a neighborhood meeting to solve a problem or consider an improvement for the neighborhood? (0-1)

Have you tried to organize a meeting to solve a problem or consider an improvement for the neighborhood? (0-1)

Have you tried to organize a group to combat delinquency in your neighborhood? (0-1)

Do you attend reunions of a religious organization? (1-4)

Do you attend parent-teacher meetings? (1-4)

Do you attend reunions of a professional organization? (1-4)

Do you attend reunions of a trade union? (1-4)

Do you attend reunions of some civic association? (1-4)

Knowledgeable Voters

Do you remember what the name of the President of the United States is? (0-1)

Do you remember how many states/provinces/regions your country has? (0-1)

How long does the presidential term last in your country? (0-1)

Do you remember what the name of the Brazilian president is? (0-1)

Political Efficacy

Do you believe that voting can better the future or do you believe that no matter who you vote for, things will not get better? (0-1)

Democratic Attitudes: There are people that always criticize the government. To what point do you approve the right of those people to vote?
To what point do you approve their right to protest peacefully?
To what point do you approve their right to run for office?
To what point do you approve their right to appear on TV to give a

speech?

To what point do you approve a law that would ban public protests?

To what point do you approve the right of association of any organization that critiques the government?

To what point do you approve the government banning TV shows?

To what point do you approve the government banning books at a public school?

To what point do you approve the government censuring the media that criticizes the government?

Corruption Attitudes: In a situation where a deputy accepts a bribe to help a corporation, would you say that the deputy is: a) corrupt and should be punished b) corrupt but justified c) not corrupt.

An unemployed person is the brother-in-law of an important politician. The politician uses his contacts to get him a public job. This politician is: a) corrupt and should be punished b) corrupt but justified c) not corrupt.

Control Variables

Female

0 Man

1 Woman

Catholic

0 Non Catholic

1 Catholic

Education

In years between 0 and post-graduate

Income (household)

0 No Income

1 Less than 800

2 Between 801-1600

3 \$1,601-\$2,400

4 \$2,401-\$3,200

5 \$3,201-\$4,000

6 \$4,001-\$5,400

7 \$5,401-\$6,800

8 \$6,801-\$10,000

9 \$10,001-\$13,500

10 More than \$13,501

Ideological Spectrum:

1 to 10 with 10 being Far Right.

Economic Perspective:

Current Economic Situation of the Country

How would you rate the Economic situation of the country?

5. Very good. 4. Good. 3. Not good or bad. 2. Bad. 1. Very bad.

Economic Forecast

Do you think that in the next twelve months, the economic situation will improve?

3. Better. 2. The same. 1. Worse.

Unemployment

Have you been unemployed in the last year?

1. Yes. 0. No.

APPENDIX B

OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES AND SOURCES FOR CHAPTER 3

Operationalization of Variables and Sources

Dependent Variables

Participation: percentage of people that voted as divided between actual vote and number of people in the *lista nominal* in the different elections (for *presidente municipal*—county executive—or for state deputy).

Competitiveness: Distance in vote percentage between the two top vote getters.

Third party power: Sum of the two top vote getters subtracted from one hundred.

Incumbent Party: Dummy variable representing whether or not the winner of the *municipio*'s election belonged to the same party that had won previously. 1 for yes, 0 otherwise.

Governor's Party: Dummy variable representing whether or not the winner of the *municipio*'s election belonged to the party (or coalition) that elected the current governor of the state. 1 for yes, 0 otherwise.

Independent Variables

Immigration numbers per household: All numbers come from the 2000 dataset carried out by CONAPO, which itself was based on the census sample that surveyed 2.2 million households in Mexico. This is available at <http://www.conapo.gob.mx>

Households: Number of domestic units in each of the 2443 *municipios* in Mexico.

Households that receive remittances: Percentage of domestic units in the *municipio* where at least one of its members declared having received money transferences from another country.

Households with migrants in the US (from the previous five year cycle): Percentage of domestic units where at least one person left the *municipio* between 1995 and 2000 to live permanently in the US.

Households with circular migrants (from the previous five year cycle): Percentage of domestic units from the *municipio* where at least one person lived in the US between 1995 and 2000, but where both census (1995, 2000) counted the person as having lived in Mexico.

Households with return migrants (from the previous five year cycle): Percentage of domestic units where at least one person lived in the US for more than five years and now is living permanently in the *municipio*.

Percentage of the Female Population: Number for each *municipio* taken from the INEGI's 2000 Census.

Percentage of the Indigenous Population: Number of individuals who self-identified as indigenous in the 2000 Census for each *municipio*.

Percentage of People Employed: Number of individuals who held at least one minimum wage job according to the 2000 Census.

Percentage of Catholics: Number of individuals who self-identified as Catholics in the 2000 Census.

Percentage of Adults: Number for individuals older than 18 in the *municipio* according to the 2000 Census.

Size of municipio: Geographical dimensions in km² for each municipio. The source was the *Enciclopedia de los Municipios de México*, published in 1988 with tomes for all 32 states in the country.

Percentage of Gap in Educational attainment: Percentage of households with at least one member which did not finish middle school.

GDP per capita: GDP per capita counted in current dollars for each *municipio*, taken from CONAPO.

Marginality: Measure created by CONAPO to gauge the marginality of each *municipio*. The figures are an index that came as a result of a logarithm that included the following data:

Percentage of Illiterate population older than 15.

Percentage of population older than 15 that did not finish primary school.

Percentage of population older than 15.

Percentage of people in households that did not have access to sewer system or bathroom inside household.

Percentage of population in households without access to electricity.

Percentage of population in households without access to a water system.
Percentage of population in households with some level of crowdedness.
Percentage of population in households with dirt floors.
Percentage of population in towns with less than 5000 people.
Percentage of working population living on two minimum salaries or less.

Human Index: Measure created by CONAPO to capture the likelihood humans can reach their full potential as human beings. The logarithm here included the following data:

Average life expectancy.
Likelihood of surviving the first year of life.
GDP per capita counted in current dollars.
Average level of education per municipio.
Quality of education.

Social Development Index: Measure created by CONAPO to have a better poverty gauge than Marginality or GDP per capita. The figure is a logarithm that resulted in a coefficient ranging theoretically between 0 and 1. The logarithm includes:

Location of household (urban or rural).
The material used for the household's floor.
Access to drainage and sewer services for the household.
Level of education is for the main breadwinner.
Sex of the main breadwinner,
Age of the main breadwinner,
Level of crowdedness for the household
Owning of a stove,
Owning of a car,
Owning of a fridge,
Access to social benefits,
Number of children under 12 in the household,
Number of children between 5 and 15 who go to school.
Number of children between 5 and 15 who work.

Border States: Dummy variable representing whether or not *municipio* belonged to one of the states bordering the United States. 1 for yes, 0 otherwise.

Crime: Number of total **reported** crimes in a *municipio* for the year 2000.

APPENDIX C

FIELD WORK QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR CHAPTER 4

Field Work Questionnaire

1. To what extent do you think migrants have had an impact on the area?
2. To what extent do you think migrants have had a political impact on the area?
3. Do you think that migrants have different political attitudes than individuals that never left?
4. Do you think that migrants have different political concerns than individuals that never left?
5. To what extent do you think experience abroad is valuable in trying to solve political problems?
6. To what extent are people interested in participating politically in this area? Would you say that people are very much interested? Somewhat interested? Or not interested at all?
7. To what extent do you think it matters to people from this area the specific party that gains power? Would you say that it makes a lot of difference? Some difference? Or no difference at all? (This question asked to non-politicians).
8. To what extent do you think people see voting as a way to change things? Do you think they find it useful or that it makes no difference at all? (This question asked to non politicians).

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